Roanoke, Town of
Lewis County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-209

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

Location: Lewis County
West Virginia

Present Owner: United States Army Corps of Engineers

Present Occupant: Vacant

Project Information: The Village of Roanoke will be inundated as part of the Stonewall Jackson Lake project. Mitigative documentation prepared by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Section of Man. Editor: Ronald C. Carlisle. Architectural and Historical Research: Ronald L. Michael, Denise L. Grantz. Oral History: John F. Bauman, Thomas H. Coode. Psychological Anthropology: John M. Roberts, Ronald C. Carlisle. Architectural Drawings: Frank S. Adkins, Jr., Arden Bardol.

A Social History of Roanoke, West Virginia

by

John F. Bauman and Thomas H. Coode

To the rolling hills and random streams that contour the upper valley of the West Fork River in central Lewis County, West Virginia, came John Duvall, the first resident of the region, who settled at Arnold Station in 1775 (Comstock 1976: 4114-4115). While others began to buy land in the Roanoke area around Canoe and Rush runs, it was Duvall who in 1785 purchased some 400 acres which included the present site of Roanoke. A prominent frontiersman, Duvall later secured an additional 1400 acres in the area between Roanoke and Arnold Station (Cook 1924: 1). Later settlers bought land from Duvall and established the greater Roanoke community. As an example, John Smith began to hunt and farm in 1820 on the Duvall property about 1 mile above Roanoke (Figure 4); Henry McCauley was another early settler (Comstock 1976: 4115).

In 1812, John Mitchell became the area's first "permanent" settler when he located on the old Anderson and Hanway tract in the Collins Settlement District (Cook 1924: 2). A native of Harrison County, Virginia, Mitchell had explored the region as early as 1808. Six years later his son, Abner, built a homestead above the mouth of White Oak Lick, and in 1820 the Lewis County Court ordered that a road be constructed from Abner Mitchell's place to the river fork at what is now Jacksonville, West Virginia. This road was declared a public highway two years after Mitchell erected a sawmill near his home in 1830 and a few years before he built a bridge at the mouth of Canoe Run near Roanoke. Thus, much of the area's early exploration, public works, settlement and economic activity can be traced to the efforts of Abner Mitchell (Cook 1924: 3).

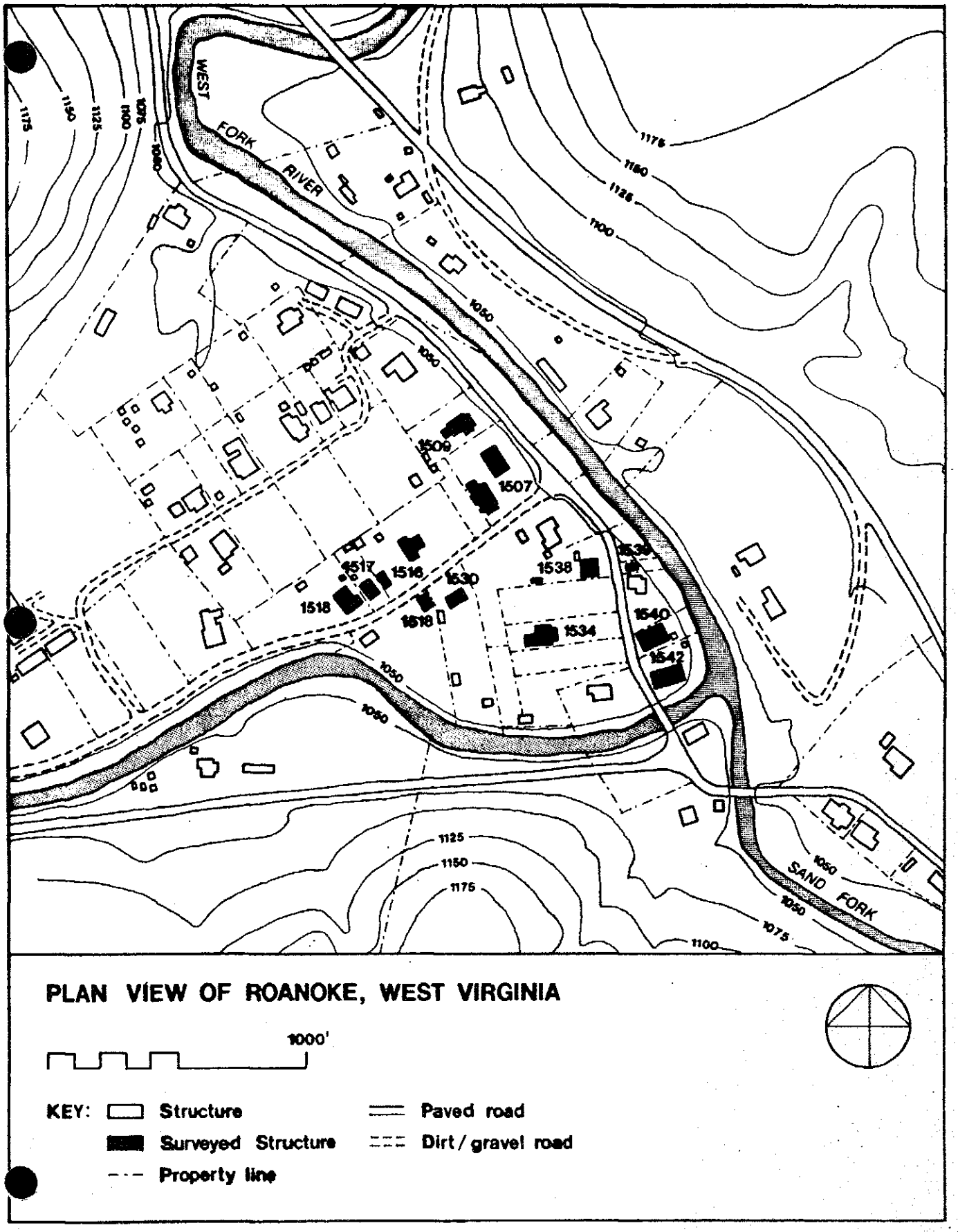

Figure 3. Plan view of Roanoke, West Virginia, showing location of surveyed structures by tract number (after Gilbert/Commonwealth 1980I: 103, Figure 5.1, Sheet 14).

Figure 4. Henry R. Smith, ancestor of Lawrence G. Smith and other Roanoke residents and descendant of John Smith. He was one of the founding fathers of the Collins Settlement District and Bush's Mills (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection).

In the interim, two other pioneers had moved into the area, two men whose names would be forever a part of the history of Roanoke. In 1825, Richard Bond came to the region, and within 20 years he had obtained title to almost 200 acres (Cook 1924: 11-12). The Bond family worked this land for over 150 years and were instrumental in beginning the local Seventh Day Baptist Church on land donated by the family (Freddie and George Bond 1981, pers. comm.). In 1981, Freddie and George Bond still lived in a trailer/home on U.S. Route 19 between the old abandoned church and a relocated 19th century log and frame barn.

Also in 1825 Michael G. Bush, a resident of Skin Creek, purchased from the Duvalls 400 acres along the West Fork River, an area that included present day Roanoke (Brinkley 1947: 1). With the approval of the county, Bush built a dam and a gristmill which has been described as "a huge hewn log structure" with "a huge overshot wheel that exceeded any in size in the entire county" (Cook 1924: 13). The mill, with machinery for cutting timber as well as for grinding flour, became an important economic asset to the growing community.

Near the mill, Bush built his home in 1830 (Figure 5). Described later as "a better and more pretentious structure than the average one of that time" (Cook 1924: 13; Gilbert/Commonwealth 1980 II: 13), it was the finest home in the area and withstood all the vicissitudes of time and man until the wooden structure was removed from its stone foundation in the summer of 1978 (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.; Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.).

In addition to endowing the area with his fine home and the functions of his mill, Bush offered other services to the community. For several years he taught school, both in his home and in a nearby log structure which has since disappeared. He was the area's first merchant, opening its first store, and also dealt in livestock and real estate. Bush served as a deputy sheriff of Lewis County, West Virginia, and became the first postmaster of the new post office called Bush's Mill (Upper West Fork River Watershed Association 1978: 25).

In 1845 Bush sold his mill, "two acres and 129 poles" to Isaac Waldo, and in succeeding years the mill was called Waldo's Mill although the post office retained its original name. Eventually, severe flooding, changes in the course of the river and damage inflicted by Confederate forces during the Civil War weakened the mill's foundation. In the 1870s, the structure began to settle into the riverbed, and it was gradually washed away by a succession of floods that continued to plague the area (Cook 1924: 14; Comstock 1974: 4115).

While Bush's mill operated, other settlers moved into the area and sought its services. As examples, Jonathan Wheeler settled in the area of Canoe Run, and both James and Henry McCauley located near the mouth of White Oak Lick. In 1883, Abraham Rohrbaugh settled on "Abrams Knob," (Cook 1924: 3), and John and William Godfrey settled on the bottom land below. William Rohrbaugh located on Canoe Run and built a roadside log dwelling (now known as the Mary Conrad House) between the mouth of this stream and Roanoke. In the late 1830s, Jacob and Amon Hevener purchased land on the south side of the West Fork River; a short time later, Reuben Hevener and his parents located nearby (on part of the Anderson-Hanway Survey). Reuben's father, Adam Hevener, was the first to be buried in the family cemetery, high on a hill overlooking the Hevener orchards (Figure 6). One of Reuben's sons had 14 children (Figure 7); a number of them intermarried with the Bond, Bird and other local families and became loyal


TON, WEST VIRGINIA

M. G. Bush's house built in 1830. It was first weather boarded house in the community. Was used as school, post-office and store. Mr. and Mrs. John Riddle are now living in house after much remodeling work had been done.

"A man's Sunday self and his weekday self are like two halves of a round-trip ticket, not good

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Figure 5. Michael G. Bush log dwelling, built 1830, served as a school, post office, store and the residence of one of the Roanoke area's most prominent early merchants and citizens (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection). Unfortunately, the structure was dismantled in 1978 before it could be surveyed in architectural detail.

Figure 6. The Hevener homestead and orchards, ca. 1930 (Barbara Hevener Photograph Collection).

The Hevenes
Adam 1774-1859
Reuben 1812-77
Mansfield 1857-1733
Bettie A 1861-1930
Maude 1890-1962
Harvey 1881-1944
Arthur 1893-84
Marlin 1894-1901
John 1895-1962
Claude 1897-1937
Edna 1899-1899
Lula 1890-1970
Bedcath 1872-94
Okeley P 1894-unknown
Charles Walter 1876-1973
Lela 1878-1980
Amy 1902-06
Anita 1904
Harry 1921
Willard 1922-77
Arlett Lee 1960-62
Robert Lynn 1961-

Figure 7. Handwritten list of the Hevener family births and deaths (Barbara Hevener Photograph Collection).

members of the Seventh Day Baptist Church (Cook 1924: 3-4; Barbara Hevener 1981, pers. comm.; Weston Democrat 12 March 1980).

In 1852, Erasmus Rhodes migrated to the area. Born in Rockingham County, Virginia, in 1826 Rhodes went to California in the Gold Rush of 1849. Returning to the East, he married Jacob Hevener's daughter, Elizabeth, and purchased the main holdings of the Hevener tract. Later he increased his property holdings to 1200 acres by purchasing land above the village of Roanoke, along the upper West Fork River (Cook 1924: 4). Rhodes built the largest orchard in the region. However, while he was away serving in the Confederate cavalry, it was destroyed, ironically by Confederate troops. His wife died in 1866, and in the following year Rhodes married Mary Catherine Conrad, daughter of George Conrad, Sr. In 1868, Rhodes' fine manor house burned to the ground. Overcoming his many misfortunes, within a year or two Rhodes built a sturdy Victorian home which stands to the present day (Upper West Fork River Watershed Association 1978: 21; Gilbert/Commonwealth 1980: 15).

In addition to ransacking the Rhodes place during the Civil War, Confederate troops also beseiged the famous Conrad Station log dwelling, an historic site which today stands along the Stonewall Jackson Highway (U.S. Route 19), commanding the very entrance to the village of Roanoke. Erected of hewn logs by William Rohrbaugh in 1847, the log house was purchased in 1885 by George Conrad who later added the rear portion or annex (Cook 1924: 16-17).

In September 1861, the Conrad log dwelling became the local station of the Federal military express, a relay station for star (postal) riders moving south from Weston, West Virginia, via the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike to Sutton, West Virginia. Nine months later the structure became the local post office which was still known by the name Bush's Mill. Union messengers and horses were quartered here, and although the United States Government agreed to pay Conrad per diem and the other costs incurred by their occupation, one bill for $32.60 remained outstanding. The government also continued to refer to the place as Bush's Mill, Virginia, until the late fall of 1863, although West Virginia had been admitted to the Union the previous June (Cook 1924: 17).

Since Weston, the county seat of Lewis County, West Virginia, straddled the border between North and South and was as well a crucial junction of the railroad, raiding parties of both sides patrolled the region during the Civil War. To protect the railroad and to monitor the area around Weston, a Union regiment from Ohio was stationed there. Townsfolk of Roanoke maintain that some of these Ohio volunteers who later became famous drank from the cold, refreshing well water at Conrad Station; among them were Rutherford B. Hays, William McKinley and Whitelaw Reid (journalist and Ambassador to England). It is thought that Union generals Nathan Goff, E. P. Scammon (twice captured by the Confederates), J. A. J. Lightburn and William S. Rosecrans also dipped their canteens there (Brinkley 1947: 6).

Another famous visitor to Bush's Mill was General John D. Imboden, a Confederate officer from Virginia. During the Civil War it was often necessary for Union messengers, mail carriers and anyone else in the Conrad dwelling to flee to the surrounding hills to escape marauding guerrillas or regular Confederate troops. Not all were able to do so in April 1863, however, when Imboden led 700 Confederate cavalry into the area in search of Union troops with orders to destroy railroad bridges (Buckner 1959: 445). Called "Imboden's Raid" the incident is highly regarded among local historians (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.). Some of Imboden's men were camped in the Union schoolhouse where the West Fork Baptist Church congregation met (part of the Broad Run Baptist

Association); other Confederates were at the Rhodes farmstead watering their horses in the river below it at Corley's Rocks. In the meantime, Imboden and his lieutenants rode to the Conrad Station where they ordered Mrs. Conrad to prepare them a chicken dinner. After eating, the men hung her blue drinking cups on the picket fence outside and used them for target practice. Mary Conrad, George Conrad's granddaughter and for a long time one of Roanoke's most prominent citizens, often told the story of how William Conrad, then a boy 14 years old:

> hid all the valuables - the money was put in a bottle . . . and buried under the pear tree - the guns hid in a cliff across the river - the three horses and cows were taken way back on the hill in front of the house and hid in the woods (Brinkley 1947: 6-7).

Her grandfather, as she often heard her uncles tell it, wrapped the postal funds in a newspaper and gave the package ". . . to Mary Ann (Conrad) who handed it to Mr. Joshway Williamson saying 'here is the dress pattern your wife wants.' He left at once up the hill in front of the house and round the ridge to his home" (Brinkley 1947: 6-7). Apparently, all of this occurred in front of Imboden and his men. George Conrad was born in Shenandoah County, Virginia, in 1800; with his wife and family he migrated to the Roanoke area in the 1850s. A leading citizen from the beginning, Conrad was the progenitor of the Lewis County Conrads, leaving behind a considerable number of heirs, at least four of whom followed him as local postmaster (Cook 1924: 18; Brinkley 1947: 1-2).

Turnpike building in the 1840s promoted the regional economy. By 1858, the 109 miles of the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike (Kemp 1980) together with the Stanton and Parkersburg Pike had been completed through Lewis County linking Roanoke to Weston, Sutton and Parkersburg, West Virginia. The turnpikes never lived up to local expectations. Tolls never completely paid for road maintenance on the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike, and the Civil War demolished most of it (Smith 1920). Nevertheless, by 1876 the little village of Roanoke had become part of a thriving lumber, cattle and farming center—indeed, it even had a new name, one that has for a century confused postmasters, geographers, lexicographers and others. In 1874, George Conrad retired as postmaster, and Charles A. Horner, (also spelled Hornor) a local storekeeper, was named to succeed him; the post office itself accordingly was removed from Conrad's home to Horner's feed store located at the intersection of the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike and the Sand Fork Road. Perhaps as a result of this change, and with local optimism about a new and thriving community, the time-honored name of Bush's Mill gave way to the new name of Roanoke. Whatever the reason for the change, and there are a number of claims as to who suggested the new name, no one seems to know for sure why it became Roanoke. One historian has claimed that the editor of the Weston Democrat wanted it named after John Randolph of Roanoke, Virginia. Whatever the source, the name apparently bears no relationship to any local family, site or event (Cook 1924: 19-20; Brinkley 1947: 2; Smith 1920: 203, 346).

The change in name had no effect on the people of Roanoke, but it did perplex some Virginians. Perhaps still smarting from the defection of their western counties to the Union cause in the Civil War, a group of Roanoke, Virginia, residents once visited Roanoke, West Virginia, and requested that the name of the latter be changed in deference to their city's greater size. The West Virginians obviously rejected the notion. To make matters worse—or perhaps simpler from the railroad's point of view—the West Virginia and Pittsburgh Railway named the local station Roanville, and the station if not the town remained Roanville until the end of its days (Comstock 1976: 15).

The station name notwithstanding, the railroad greatly aided the economy of the Roanoke community by causing a freight station to be erected there. In the late 1880s, officials of the West Virginia and Pittsburgh Railway secured rights-of-way and surveyed the area in preparation for the construction of a rail line through Roanoke. In 1889, the Weston and Elk River Railroad Company began construction, providing work for local townsmen (Cook 1924: 20; Comstock 1976: 4115). During this period, a typhoid fever epidemic struck the workers, and historians have recorded that over 120 cases existed at one time (Cook 1924: 20; Comstock 1976: 4115). Fortunately, this epidemic did not unduly delay the railroad project, nor did it diminish local enthusiasm. An anxious crowd cheered when "Old Number Ten" (bearing little resemblance to later locomotives), with its line of work cars and its large funnel smokestack, groaned to negotiate the many curves and inclines along the river before becoming the first train to enter Roanoke. By 1891, the "Old Gauley" was making regular runs through the village, serving not only the local townspeople but farmers in the surrounding area as well (Cook 1924: 20).

As Roy Bird Cook, a native of Canoe Run and the principal historian of Roanoke, has written, the community thereafter "took on a new life" (Cook 1924: 20). Travel over the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike declined as the new railroad brought into greater proximity the farm products and the small towns for which they were destined.

The railroad invariably drew Roanoke closer to the county seat at Weston, West Virginia. As it had not suffered the physical destruction of other areas where North and South met during the Civil war (although emotional scars undoubtedly remained as many West Virginia families had sons who fought on opposite sides during the war), Weston enjoyed a commercial resurgence after the conclusion of the war in 1865. In the 1870s, the town became a railroad center, and this facilitated commerce and the growth of industry. Soon, Weston claimed a number of industries including carriage, bedspring, and handle factories, a hotel, furniture and hardware stores and a growing glass industry. The town also became an important center for the shipment of lumber, wool, poultry and livestock (Smith 1920: 61; Comstock 1976: 4115).

THE ROANOKE ECONOMY

In the early years of the railroad (i.e., the 1890s), Roanoke exported primarily wool and timber. In a few years, however, cheaper wool from the West undermined the local product; Roanoke farmers continued to raise sheep for both wool and mutton, but in reduced numbers. Although much of Lewis County's virgin timber was gone by the turn of the century, Roanoke served for years as a center for the shipment of lumber from Canoe Run, the Sand Fork River and the upper woodlands of Skin Creek (Borchert 1967: 34; William and Eveline Horner 1981, pers. comm.). The mills that the lumber industry required stimulated the economic growth of Roanoke and nearby communities, and in the process more land was cleared for farming and cattle grazing. There were a number of sawmills in the area; former Roanoke resident and local historian Lawrence G. Smith recalled that Robert Duncan operated a large sawmill in Roanoke. Duncan shipped oak, white oak, maple, chestnut and beech timber 4" thick and 2' wide into Weston before some of it was shipped abroad. After Duncan left the business, Pete Conrad and Al Linger operated the mill and sold ties to the railroad (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.). By the time the old rail ties and tracks were removed in 1942, most of the best timber in the area was gone.

Throughout the life of the railroad, livestock was Roanoke's (or Roanville's) greatest export, particularly beef and turkeys. Before World War II almost all of the farmers near Roanoke raised turkeys, many of them 100 or so annually. Most Roanoke

turkeys were locally killed, dressed and shipped in barrels to Philadelphia and Baltimore; others were sold on consignment to local storekeepers who either processed them or merely handled their sale to packers in Weston and elsewhere (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.; Woodrow and Lucille Perrine 1981, pers. comm.; Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

Because of its superior facilities, Roanoke became a crucial shipping point for beef from all over the Collins Settlement District. (This was the name given to an area of approximately 5,000 acres in southern Lewis County, West Virginia. A separate magisterial district, it was named after one of its original settlers, George Collins.) This helped to make Lewis County one of West Virginia's premier stock-raising counties. Equipped with large pens, chutes and holding areas, the Roanville station handled thousands of head of cattle and other livestock each year. Many older residents of Roanoke have recalled the exciting times when they helped to drive herds right through the village to the pens to be shipped to the Weston stockyards and elsewhere (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.; William Horner1981, pers. comm.). The son of Dr. M. E. Whelan, perhaps Roanoke's best known physician, remembers seeing as many as 10 to 12 double-deck freight cars of sheep and 18 cars of cattle pulling out of the Roanville station. In its later years, the railroad also hauled in supplies for gas drillers such as derricks, drilling bits and motors (Figure 8) (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.; Frank Stoneking 1981, pers. comm.).

The train also served passengers (Figure 9). For years there were four weekday trains, two in and two out of Roanville. Although most older residents of the village claim that few people shopped in Weston during the "heyday" of the railroad, it was possible to catch a train for Weston at noon, do whatever had to be accomplished in town, and then catch a two o'clock train to the country. Ambitious travelers who had to be in Weston took the train one day, stayed at Weston's Bailey Hotel overnight, and returned to Roanoke the next day (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.; Bonnie Hawkins Fultineer 1981, pers. comm.).

In addition to its commercial value, the train provided some measure of excitement for Roanoke (Figure 10). Often enough, box car derailments along the track's many curves drew interested onlookers eager to watch road crews putting the cars back on the tracks (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). During the Great Depression of the 1930s one resident remembers that occasionally an itinerant worker, or even a hobo or two, would jump from a freight train in the area seeking work for meals and a place to stay for a few days (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.).

Former residents of Roanoke differ in assessing the impact of the railroad on the demise on the village. Many claim that its discontinuation--along with the paving of U.S. Route 19--marked the end of Roanoke's best years. Stores closed, people began to move out (e.g., displaced railroaders who moved elsewhere), doctors left, and Weston became the center for the retail trade and recreational activities of Roanoke's people. Most of those interviewed lamented the passing of the railroad and believed that Roanoke never recaptured its vital community spirit after the train was gone (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.; Frank Stoneking 1981, pers. comm.; Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.).

There are those, nonetheless, who insist that the closing of the railroad did not create new conditions but merely reflected pre-existing ones. Charles Malcolm admitted that while the removal of the train was a real blow, the Baltimore and Ohio (which earlier had purchased the West Virginia and Pittsburgh Railway) had lost interest in providing adequate service on the local line. It took too much time, he insisted, to move

Figure 8. Roanoke Street scene in 1903 illustrating railroad expansion in the area during the early 20th century. The scene shows a steam shovel being moved through Roanoke to Crawford, West Virginia, for the building of the Coal and Coke Railroad. Dr. M. E. Whelan's office (right), which was surveyed during the preparation of this report, is visible in the background.

Figure 9. Scene of Roanoke train depot and post office in 1926 with barrels possibly loaded with turkeys for shipment to the Baltimore, Maryland, market.

Figure 10. Locomotive loading water at tank located 1 mile above Roanoke, ca. 1900. The railroad virtually embodied the life, sound, even the redolence of the village (Lawrence G. Smith Photograph Collection).

stock to places like Baltimore because the railroad would not supply a train for shipment. Consequently, shippers had to wait interminable lengths of time to get a train from out of state. He once cut timber for mine posts to be shipped to Pennsylvania; it took five days to get a shipment out even though the train was going in and out of Roanoke every day. "Somebody," he said, "didn't give a damn whether it was hauled or not" (Charles Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.).

Another former resident and railroader insisted that the closing of the line did not have a significant effect on the community because trucks had begun to haul livestock over the newly paved highway, and people now traveled from Roanoke to Weston and Buckhannon, West Virginia, and elsewhere by private automobile or commercial busses (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). With the demise of the railroad and the opening of new U.S. Route 19 the village ceased to be an important distribution center, and Roanoke's most dynamic era had ended (Figures 11, 12).

Roanoke was first, last and always a farm community; its people marked time by the seasons, the light of day and the periodic "paydays" when they sold their livestock and produce. During the principal period of the railroad's operation, many farmers cleared land, mended fences, cut hay and produced field corn for 100 or more head of cattle, shipping them by rail to Philadelphia, Baltimore, Jersey City and nearby Weston, West Virginia (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.; James Whalen 1981, pers. comm.; Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). Cattle buyers would travel through the area in the fall of the year and purchase stock from the farmers, providing them with perhaps the season's biggest payday (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.; George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.; Frank and Opal Stoneking 1981, pers. comm.; Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.; Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.; James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.; William and Evaline Horner 1981 pers. comm.). Farmers worked the land with both mules and horses, and many owned a buggy or a spring wagon before automobiles and trucks became common after World War II (Archie and Phyllis Ellis 1981, pers. comm.; James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.).

From the turn of the century through the 1930s, turkeys (mentioned earlier as a major product shipped out of Roanville) provided another large "payday" for Roanoke's farmers. Most of them had a substantial flock, and as noted above, many raised up to 100 turkeys per year (Woodrow Perrine 1981, pers. comm.; Archie Ellis 1981, pers. comm.). For years, after the weather turned chilly and the autumn and winter holidays loomed, turkeys were brought to Mullooly's store and slaughtered. Then they were weighed at the Post family's scale, packed in barrels by local people hired for the occasion and shipped by rail to Weston and other markets (George Post 1981, pers. comm.; see Figure 9).

There were other "paydays," too. Sheep farmers had two: one when buyers came through to purchase wool, the other when they sold their lambs (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.; Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.; Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). Some farmers drove to Weston in their Model T Fords to sell butter and eggs to the State Hospital there or to the new chain grocery stores; others sold potatoes, cabbage and lettuce (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.; James McClain 1981, pers. comm.; Freddie Bond 1981, pers. comm.; Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). While hogs and chickens were consumed primarily at home, some farmers shipped chickens and eggs to Baltimore as well as to other market towns and cities (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

By the 1940s, very few farmers in the Roanoke area were able to make a living by farming alone (Maxwell Martin 1981, pers. comm.; Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers.

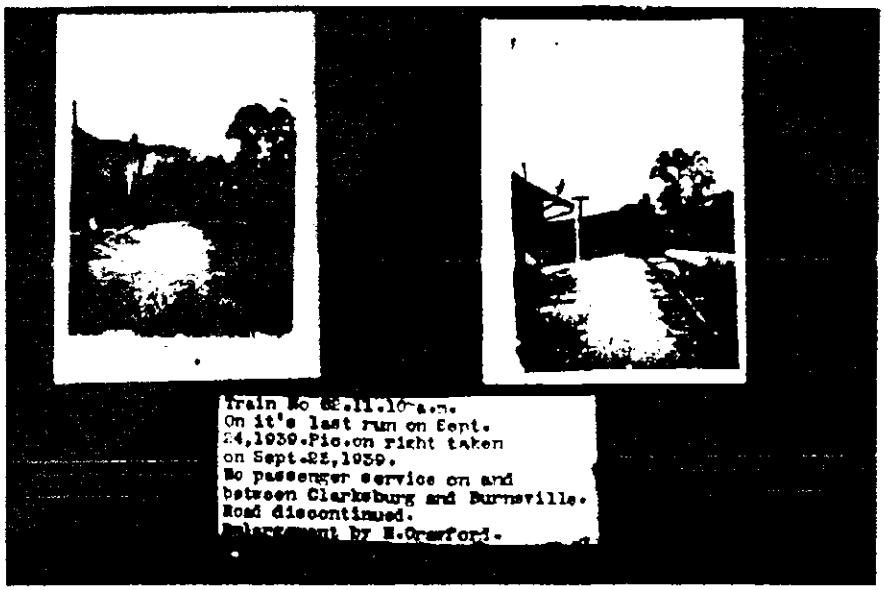

Figure 11. Scene of one of the last trains to move through Roanville on 24 September 1939 at 11:10 A.M. As the picture caption itself indicates, the photo at right was taken the previous day from the same perspective (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection).

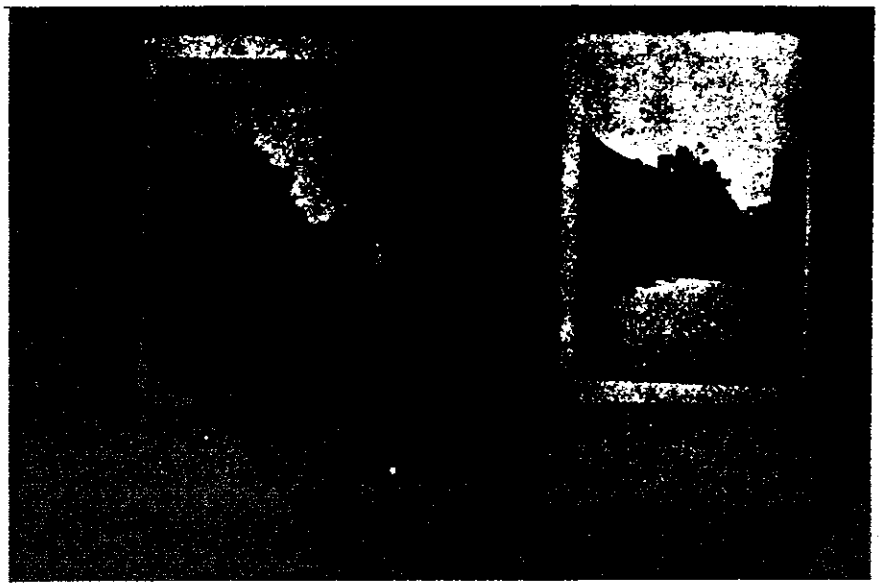

Figure 12. Two other scenes of the last trains (Nos. 62 and 65) to pass through Roanville, 24 September 1939 (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection).

comm.). James McClain, who moved to Roanoke from Peterson's Siding in 1940 and who became one of Roanoke's most respected citizens, taught school and ran a rural mail route while he raised livestock and other products on both his land and on other acres that he rented. McClain and others sold calves to feed lots in Ohio or trucked their stock to the yearling sales in nearby Buckhannon, West Virginia (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.; James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). No matter what their occupation, the people of Roanoke considered themselves blessedly rural and continued to "farm," but in the past few decades (with few exceptions) it has been almost totally subsistence farming.

Like any other rural community, Roanoke had its citizens who served the farm workers as the area continued its development. In addition to early gristmills and lumber mills, other establishments began to be located in the area. In the 1880s, William K. White opened the first hotel. it later passed to the Mullоolys and to others. H. L. Powers opened a store in 1883; I. C. Waldo and Wen Mullooly started another the following year. Meanwhile, roads were being cleared, and in 1884 John Ogden built a bridge (at a cost of $294.50) over the Sand Fork River. About the same time, at the intersection of the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike and the Sand Fork Road, Charles Horner established the area's first mercantile business (Cook 1924: 19-20).

The opening of the railroad in 1891 brought added life to the village and its environs. In that year, Thomas Feeney opened a new store in Roanoke, an enterprise which not only established one of Roanoke's leading families, but which offered her citizens the finest array of products they could purchase anywhere in the area. For about one year in 1894 David B. Cooke published in Roanoke the Willing Worker, a short-lived but popular newspaper which promoted a prohibitionist point of view.

As its production and shipment of cattle, sheep and turkeys increased, Roanoke became a bustling farm center. County records show that in 1898 there were four general stores, a harness shop, a blacksmith shop, the hotel in addition to several gristmills and lumber mills. Roanoke even claimed a millinery shop and a photography studio. The Methodist and Seventh Day Baptist churches were present, there was a local school, and two physicians, Drs. T. G. Edmiston and M. E. Whelan, both of whom located in the village in 1878, served the people of Roanoke (Cook 1924: 21).

In the 1890s, the oil and gas business came to Lewis County, West Virginia. Tests were made on Hocker's Creek and along Canoe Run. Farms were then leased to the new industry, and royalties for gas and oil led some farmers to move to town (i.e., Weston) in search of better schools and churches. In 1902, with gas as a source of energy, Weston became an important center for glass production, (for example, the Cresent Glass Company) and this drew into town those who had experienced economic difficulties on the farm. However, oil and gas production changed the basically rural face of Roanoke very little, and at the turn of the century, the county ranked second in the state in cattle production (Smith 1920: 64).

Throughout the years of the 20th century, through wars, floods and economic hardship, the people of Roanoke irrespective of ethnic background, religion or occupation, lived simple, rustic lives. Predominantly of Anglo-Saxon, northern European and Irish background, they looked upon hard work as man's truest calling, and idleness as a sign of weakness, if not wickedness. Besides tending to the farm chores, Roanoke men in the 1920s worked on construction jobs, helped to pave U.S. Route 19, worked on new pipelines, and during the Great Depression labored with the Works Progress

Administration (WPA) and on other New Deal projects. A few worked in the oil and gas fields, some strip mined and hauled coal for a living, and others worked for a power company. There were farmer/teachers, farmer/postmen and railroad workers who patronized local grocers, blacksmith shops, gristmills and lumber mills, a barber shop and the millinery shop which operated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. After World War II, a number of Roanoke's people worked in Weston (some even in Clarksburg, West Virginia) at a beauty shop, a glass factory, in local stores or at the Weston State Hospital, preferring to commute daily rather than to give up their peaceful, serene lives.

ROANOKE HOUSING

The housing of the Roanoke area reflects the background and simple tastes of most of its people. Until the middle of the last century the log house was the almost universal dwelling of the early settlers from eastern Virginia and from Pennsylvania. In many cases the logs were later obscured by a layer of weatherboard when sawmills became available and finances permitted. These log houses provided shelter for the Duvalls, Smiths, Mitchells, Bonds, Rohrbaughs, Heveners, Rhodes and Conrads--pioneer families who produced the offspring that wrote the economic and cultural history of Roanoke.

In subsequent years, another popular residential architectural style was the frame "I-house" as defined by Kniffen (1936: 185-186) and characterized by the presence of side-facing gables, two story height and single room depth. A few of these still stand in the Upper West Fork River area (Upper West Fork River Watershed Association 1978: 2).

With few exceptions, most of the homes in the Roanoke area were modest one story frame bungalow dwellings. Many were either ell or tee-shaped with German cove or clapboard siding (in some cases nailed over an original log structure); later, asbestos or insulbrick became common exterior coverings. Although many roofs typically were shingled, there were a number of sheet metal roofs and even a few constructed of slate. The houses usually were gabled, with chimneys either in the center of the roofline or at the gable ends. Although there were a few two story porches, most of the homes had modest one story porches.

There were a few large and spacious two story homes in the Roanoke area (e.g., Feeney (WV-209-I) Whelan (WV-209-D), Rhodes (WV-209-P), Conrad, Reger and Post) (Figure 13). However, most were one story dwellings consisting of from four to six rooms. Usually, each home included two to three bedrooms, a living room (or living room/parlor) and a kitchen/dining room combination. In many cases, there was a bedroom/living room combination; some former residents of Roanoke insist that this was to provide a more economic heating arrangement, while others claim that it represented the "pecking order" of the family (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.). "It was considered an honor to sleep downstairs," one resident explained in discussing a two story, yet modest home (Bertha Brinkley 1981, pers. comm.). A more speculative explanation of this pattern may be advanced. The English and Irish ethnic roots of Roanoke's population reach back into late Medieval rural peasant traditions where housing space was undifferentiated and "living" and sleeping conventionally occurred in the same room. In the relative isolation of Bush's Mill (later Roanoke) and the persistence of a core of older families (e.g., Smiths, Duvalls) as well as in the practice of ancient customs, as witnessed in the wedding serenade (see below), it seems well to suggest that room utilization patterns and such customs as the serenade may represent 15th and 16th century survivals of similar traditions (Shorter 1975).

Figure 13. Whelan dwelling (see HABS No. WV-209-E) ca. 1885, showing (left to right) Dr. M. E. Whelan, Julie and Mary Whelan. This was one of the most prestigious residences in Roanoke (James Whelan Photograph Collection).

Most Roanoke homes, regardless of size, had a center hall with entry to a parlor (which often also served as a bedroom or sitting room) that was reserved for a daughter's courting or for special days (see below). A few homes contained a pantry which was usually a small (sometimes enclosed) room off the kitchen. Most kitchens had a stove which used wood and coal as fuel. In a few cases, the kitchen stove also served to heat the house (Blaine Rollyson, Jr., 1981, pers. comm.). However, most homes contained one or more fireplaces (a few had them in every room) which heated the entire home with wood and coal. In the early days, oil lamps provided lighting. Beginning ca. 1919-1920, gas became common for lighting and heating, but electricity remained uncommon until after World War II. Inside plumbing was fairly unusual before the war; until then most people bathed inside the house in large tubs of water drawn from wells or springs. There were exceptions; for instance, Dr. C. N. Reger's home had an "inside toilet" in the 1920s (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). In some cases, however, there were outside wash houses; a few were even heated, but most outbuildings reflected both the rural background and the economic conditions of the people of Roanoke. On the larger properties, there were sizable barns, corn cribs, smokehouses and coal houses and even a stable in some cases (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). On both large and small tracts, most homesteads were characterized by the presence of outdoor toilets (in some cases, "new" ones built by the WPA in the mid-1930s), a shed that might serve a variety of purposes, hog pens and chicken coops. Almost every home, regardless of size or economic condition, had a cellar house where canned vegetables, fruits and meats were stored (William Horner 1981, pers. comm.). Located as close to the dwelling as possible, the cellar house often had a stone foundation with sawdust and straw covering the floor and with dirt or some other substance piled against the outside walls to keep the "[illegible]ights" from freezing (Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). A few occupants built covered walkways leading from the dwelling to the cellar house for easier winter access. As one elder gentleman said, "You would never starve as long as you could get to the cellar house" (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.).

Inside the dwellings the furnishings for the most part were like the people who lived there—modest, unassuming, yet sturdy and solid. While the Whelan family and perhaps a few others owned marble-top tables, solid oak dining room sets, sofas and love seats, all made by gifted cabinetmakers, most of the families furnished their homes simply (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). The living room/bedroom combination (particularly important for larger families) usually contained the family's best bed, a table or two for a battery-operated radio and perhaps for an oil lamp, a rocking chair in many cases and a stuffed easy chair for the older members of the family (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.). As often noted by the Roanoke respondents, it was the rocker which set off this bedroom from the others in the house.

Typically, bedrooms contained a homemade washstand, although these also could be found in the kitchen, a chair or two, a dresser and a mirror. Unimposing trundle and featherbeds were the rule, although there were a few high-topped bedsteads with solid oak head and foot stands and fancy homemade bedspreads (Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). In smaller homes every room had a bed, even the kitchen. Furniture which was not made at home was usually secondhand and sometimes was purchased at local stores on the installment plan. There were small closets in most of the rooms, and the cupboards were often built into the dining rooms and kitchens (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.).

Most kitchens contained a wood/coal (later gas or electric) stove used for both cooking and heating, a homemade cabinet and in some cases, a small pantry. A table and a basin used not only for preparing food but as a place where men shaved in the early

morning were not uncommon kitchen features. Few homes had carpets, and most of the walls were bare except for an occasional portrait of an ancestor or photographs of family members.

ROANOKE AS A COMMUNITY

Modest as they were, the homes of Roanoke sheltered a happy and contented people. Residential continuity rather than mobility characterized the community. Ethnically, Roanoke embraced a relatively homogenous population comprised of families of English, Irish and German extraction. Although there was some religious diversity--several Irish Catholic families long lived in the community--Roanoke enjoyed a high level of religious toleration and, in fact, the Irish Catholic families achieved considerable distinction in the community (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.). However, all respondents concurred that in the years following World War II, Roanoke was demographically an aging community that had a disproportionately large population of widows as well as an unusually large number of older bachelors--there were three.

The citizens of Roanoke interviewed in the course of this work perceived their community to be both friendly and cooperative as well as tolerant (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). "You could always count on your neighbors," explained Jim McClain. "You never knew how many friends you had until you got sick." During one of Jim's illnesses his neighbors harvested his hay without being asked (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.).

Although Roanoke was an unincorporated village, it had, in Roland Warren's (1972) definition, the basic elements of a community. That is, Roanoke enclosed social units and systems performing "locality-relevant" functions such as "production-distribution-consumption," "socialization," "social control," "social participation" and "mutual support." Most important, the community of Roanoke was integrated horizontally through several vital organizations, such as the Methodist Protestant church (see HABS No. WV-209-A), the local school (see below), the Odd Fellows (see HABS No. WV-209-L), and the Farm Women's Club. The Methodist Protestant church, for example, functioned not only as a religious institution but also as a social institution providing numerous opportunities for social intercourse (Maxwell Martin 1981, pers. comm.). Respondents hedged on which institution, the church or the school, was more vital to the social fabric of the community. Events such as box socials and "cake walks" were held at both the church and the school. During the 1920s, the school sponsored "literaries" which blended the intellectual content of the Chautauqua Society with the entertainment content of an amateur night. There were debates, poetry readings and speeches, but there was also the fourth grade singing a medley of Stephen Collins Foster songs (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

In addition to the church and the school, the Odd Fellows and the Farm Women's Club performed important roles in the community. The Farm Women's Club (later called the Home Demonstration Club) was organized in 1923 by the Extension Service of West Virginia University. In little time it assumed an important place in the life of the Roanoke community. The Farm Women met every month; at first this occurred in members' homes, but after 1961 the meetings moved to the Mary Conrad log dwelling located on the edge of Roanoke (see above). Although the log house provided a seemingly ideal setting for club meetings, several members observed that much of the informality and intimacy which had characterized the club disappeared after it stopped meeting in the homes of its members. There had always been a touch of formality about the meetings, however, even then. They commenced with a simple ritual demonstrating the

religious cast that pervaded so much of small town life (Bertha Brinkley 1981, pers. comm.). A prayer opened the meeting, followed by a brief ceremony and the secretary-treasurer's report. A collection, "Pennies for Friendship," helped the women to sponsor a foreign student at the University (Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). The Extension Service always provided a written lesson for each meeting in improving home efficiency. Farm women leaders such as Alta Anderson, Bertha Brinkley, Nora Duvall and Doris Kerns, guided the organization in its preceptive function.

The Odd Fellows and its women's auxillary, the Rebekahs, played vital roles in the Roanoke community (Figure 14). Fraternal and sororal bodies, they involved a number of people in Roanoke and its environs. In addition to the benevolent and social functions of these organizations, they secretly helped needy people in the community. Jim McClain believed the Odd Fellows perfectly complemented his church work. McClain, like George Post, compiled a longevity record in the organization; both were awarded their 35 year pins (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.). "Mr. Odd Fellow," however, was Gilbert Bowyers who, before his death in 1951, had extended his membership in the Odd Fellows over a period of 50 years. Bowyers was acknowledged by all respondents to be the single most important leader of the Roanoke community. A town postal carrier with a grade school education, Bowyers' life and reputation reveal much about the social dynamics of the community in the period between 1920 and 1950. Roanoke was socially and culturally a traditional (pre-modern) community. While not a religious people in the evangelical sense, the townspeople regarded religious values as appropriate and relevant guideposts for everyday living (Maxwell Martin 1981, pers. comm.). Bowyers never officially joined the Roanoke Methodist Protestant Church which he served a Sunday school teacher, prayer and hymn leader, but he exercised tremendous moral authority within the community. People remembered him for his oratorical gifts, and while they were never specific, they extolled Bowyers as the guiding spirit during this critical period in the town's history (Charles Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.).

Other people who over the years earned acclaim as town leaders were Dr. M. E. Whelan, Gordon Hall, Tom Feeney, Jim McClain, Bob Coburn, Nora Duvall and the Conrad sisters (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.). Clearly, people ranked financial success with piety as an enviable quality.

While Gilbert Bowyers ranked high as a moral leader and the Feeneys and Whelans were esteemed for their success, respondents found it difficult to identify specifically their roles of political and social leadership. Roanoke looked to Weston for civil and political authority. The sheriff came from Weston as did most of the other public officials having province over the town (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). The sheriff came infrequently, except during the 1920s when his visits became more frequent in vain attempts to apprehend bootleggers (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). There was a magistrate in Roanoke during the 1920s who at least had power to summons a six-man jury for cases involving local disturbances such as domestic quarrels, brawls and public drunkenness. This increase in public disturbance has been blamed on the drillers for gas wells in the area; their domestic arguments and drinking occasioned more than one calling of the jury (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.). Still, this observation does not alter the impression of Roanoke as an essentially law-abiding place. When it became necessary, however, law and order could be maintained without recourse either to the Weston sheriff or to the Roanoke magistrate but "by the fist" (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.).

Alas, there was a break in the overall record of tranquility and consensus which characterized Roanoke. In 1960, the Farm Women and the Odd Fellows cooperated to

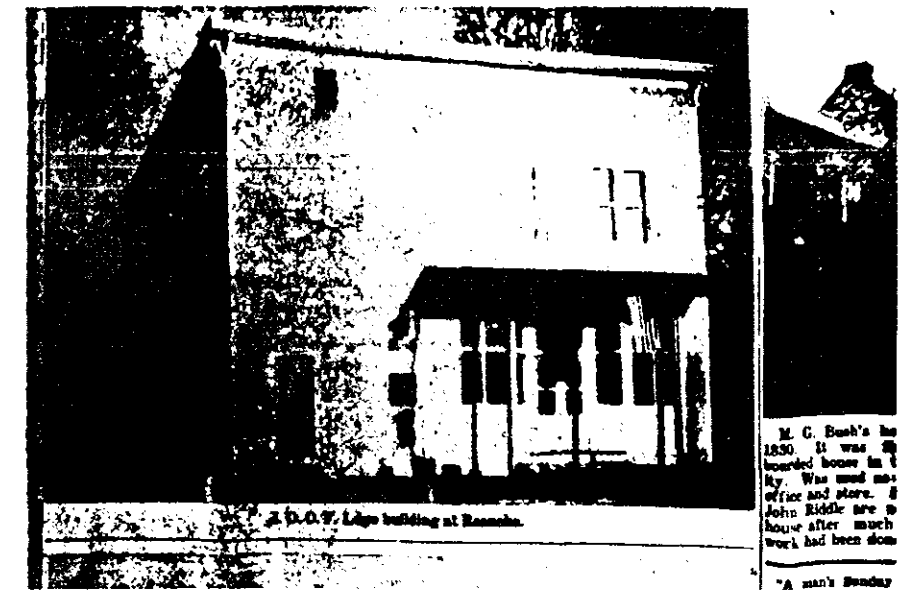

Figure 14. The Roanoke Odd Fellows Lodge as it appeared March 1959, For many years the first floor of the building housed a series of grocery and feed stores (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection).

transform the first floor store area below the Lodge Hall into a community center where groups such as the 4H and the Farm Women could meet. Both groups worked hard on the project, but the women felt that they worked harder than the men (Ruth Posey Fox 1981, pers. comm.). Once completed, the Farm Women met for two months in the hall until one day they arrived to discover a padlock on their new meeting place. Shortly thereafter, a bill was submitted for two months rent. Naturally, the Farm Women were furious, and a bitter fight ensued which split the town down the middle (Bertha Brinkley 1981, pers. comm.). The affront was never forgotten by those most deeply involved, and the misunderstanding was not resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. Instead, Mary Conrad gave the State of West Virginia her family's log dwelling on U.S. Route 19 with the stipulation that it could be used by the Farm Women for their meeting place as long as they needed it (Charles Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.).

THE FAMILY

As important as local institutions are, families are the building blocks of any community. Many of Roanoke's families trace their origins to the 18th and early 19th century pioneers who immigrated to Lewis County from eastern Virginia and from Upshur, Harrison and Braxton counties. Of English, German and Irish ethnic stock, Roanoke respondents characterized these pioneer families as highly independent and yet extremely neighborly.

In the manner of small, isolated rural communities across the nation, many Roanoke families were interlocked through extensive kinship networks. For example, the Smiths, Andersons, Riddles, Helmicks and Duvalls are all interrelated. Bertha Brinkley and George Post are parallel cousins as their mothers were sisters (Bertha Brinkley, 1981, pers. comm.). George's wife, Ruth, was a McCray and therefore related to the Snyders where McCrays grace the lineage (Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). In fact, the McCrays, like the Rohrbaughs, show up in family trees throughout Roanoke. Thus, the Posey family is related to the Cecil Fox family through the McCray line, and the Rollyson claim to Rohrbaugh blood connects them to the Smiths, Duvalls, Arnolds and other old families who settled in the Collins Settlement District (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

Although kinship networks and spatial proximity allowed these families to function often as extended families, the typical family unit in the Roanoke area was nuclear, that is, mother, father and their children. There were two exceptions discussed by respondents. One of these was the Joseph Smith family (Lawrence G. Smith's brother) who for years occupied the Michael G. Bush house. In the Smith house resided grandmother and grandfather Riddle, an uncle and a cousin from Akron, Ohio (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). Blaine Rollyson, Jr. was raised in a family with an aunt, uncle, grandfather and grandmother all living in a single household (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

Roanoke area couples normally married after one or two year courtships (see below). The marriage age was usually 18-21 years for both men and women. After marriage, newlyweds ordinarily moved into their own house, establishing a neolocal residence. Although this was the desired and usual pattern, periods of economic shortfall (particularly during the Great Depression) could change it. William Horner married Gilbert Bowyers' daughter, Evaline, in 1930 and "out of necessity" moved into her father's home. Recently married couples might pass several months to a year in such an uxorilocal (or virilocal) residence pattern before acquiring the wherewithall to obtain a residence of their own (William and Evaline Horner 1981, pers. comm.).

Dowries or grants of land were quite exceptional. Only Blaine Rollyson, Jr. could recall the practice, and even then it seemed to be confined to the earlier history of the town. Rollyson recalled hearing that in the 19th century some fathers gave their sons a farm. He thought that the Eckes family gave their sons a grant of land and a horse as a wedding gift. His grandfather Rohrbaugh gave all the girls in the family a horse and a cow as a dowry. Rollyson also observed that when his father and mother married they moved in with the groom's family and lived there for several years (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

Lawrence G. Smith, Gordon Hall and William Horner argued persuasively that since parcels of land were usually small in the Roanoke region (200 acres was a very large farm), families resisted subdividing the land among their sons. Ultimately, the land fell to "heirships" and was divided unless one of the heirs cared enough and was capable of buying out the other heirs thereby keeping the parcel intact.

In general, families in Roanoke appear to have been authoritarian and guided by tradition (Woodrow Perrine 1981, pers. comm.). While few families were described as "religious," (Charles Hawkins, the McCrays, Gilbert Bowyers certainly were, as were the Bonds), Roanoke families of the 1920s and 1930s were faithful churchgoers (James and Bonnie Hawkins Fultineer 1981, pers. comm.). Families customarily took three meals a day together and offered grace before each meal (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.). Only when there was an urgent need to get a crop in on time, recalled Maxwell Martin, was there a delay in having dinner at the appointed hour (Maxwell Martin 1981, pers. comm.).

As every respondent in Roanoke has testified, there was a division of labor in Roanoke families. Working in the fields, feeding the livestock, milking the cows, washing the clothes, gardening and cooking, were all chores in the rural environment of Roanoke. For the youth of Roanoke, these chores were assigned, and performance was expected. Moreover, as Table 2 indicates, there was a clear sex gradient in the division of labor.

Many of the chores, such as feeding animals and milking, required young children to rise at 5:00 A.M., finish their chores, eat breakfast and then, if they lived in areas outside Roanoke itself, walk a mile or more to the local school.

Distant from the tide of urban-industrialism which washed over much of the United States in the 19th century, Roanoke families perpetuated the less frantic pace and traditions identified with a pre-industrial society. For decades the town remained an isolated, rural community devoid of most modern conveniences--as if the march of science and technology had passed it by. As noted briefly above, few homes had electricity until after World War II, and there were few automobiles as well. Outdoor plumbing (the "new" outhouses built by the WPA) remained the rule, and entertainment was focused on home or community experiences. Consequently, many local institutions outwardly designed for specific functions served social and communal purposes, drawing Roanoke's people together into a special "family" relationship. When interviewed, most of Roanoke's former residents particularly recalled the role of the church, the stores, the school, the doctors and the Odd Fellows (among others) for these had special meaning and were the threads of continuity in the weave of their daily lives.

TABLE 2

. Sexual Differentiation in Typical Domestic Tasks Reported

by Roanoke Respondents

Chores Reported	Number of cases (N)	Sex of Youth Performing Task	
		Male	Female
Fetching coal or wood	3	3	—
Washing clothes	1	--	1
Milking	2	1	1
Feeding livestock	4	4	--
Cooking	2	—	2
Gardening	3	--	3
Taking care of younger children	1	—	1
Housecleaning	3	—	3

ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE: THE CHURCH AND THE SCHOOL

Most former residents of Roanoke remembered the Methodist Protestant church as the most important institution outside the family. Yet, as stated earlier, most of them also insisted that the people of Roanoke were not particularly "religious" or at least no more so than "most anybody else." Unlike the situation in the cities where organized charity ward politicians and mayors provided the primary social welfare benefits of the day, the role of the rural church was to succor the sick, the infirm and others in need, in addition to its more traditional role of offering spiritual guidance to its congregation.

While there were other church groups in the area--the Catholics at Goosepen, the Seventh Day Baptists on Canoe Run and, years before, the Baptists at the old Union School House--the primary focus of Roanoke's religious life was the Methodist Protestant Church located in the village (Figure 15). The first Methodist Church was "Margaret's Chapel" located on the side of a hill on the Michael G. Bush property (Cook 1924: 6, 19). A one story frame building, the chapel had a cemetery at the site. Later, the chapel was moved about 1 mile to the Joseph Smith home (Brinkley 1947: 8-9). After holding classes the Fairview School, the Methodists built the present church in Roanoke, offering its dedication on 14 July 1886 (Borchert 1967: 65). This church served its congregation for over 95 years (Figure 16).


M. P. Church at Roanoke taken in fall of 1903 by J. A. Smith.

Figure 15. The Roanoke Methodist Protestant Church as it appeared in 1903. The Church was regarded as the focal point of Roanoke society.

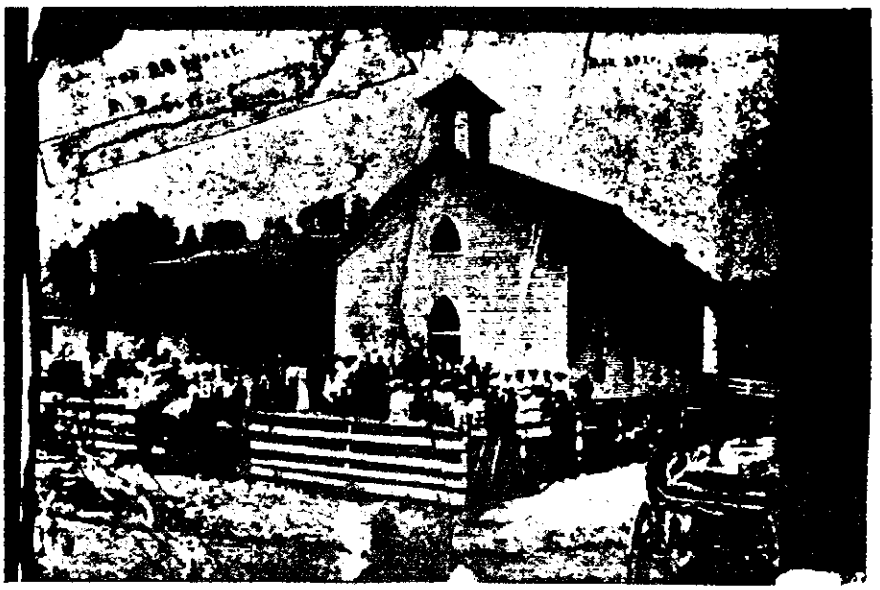

Figure 16. The Roanoke Sunday school in May 1904. Of the several Roanoke organizations existing at the turn of the century, the Methodist Protestant Sunday school probably involved the most people (Freda Fisher Photograph Collection).

The church's Sunday service was traditionally Protestant. Led by leaders such as Ben Linger and Gilbert Bowyers, the Smiths, the McCrays and the Conrads and later James McClain, Maxwell Martin and others, the church service from 11:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. also featured a Sunday school, singing (from 10:10 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.) and Bible reading, with a preacher coming in once a month to deliver the sermon. Most Methodists rested on the Sabbath after spending two hours or so in church and then eating a large Sunday meal (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.).

It was the usual practice to hold a Wednesday evening prayer service. Each winter, the church also held a revival, or "church warming," as one former resident called it (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.) At these affairs, which sometimes lasted three weeks, local laymen would conduct "experiences" for the gathering, while in the evenings, a minister would preach and offer the "invitation." These meetings often drew outsiders into Roanoke, and Gordon Hall (84 years old in 1981) recalled a revival in 1912 where there were six or seven conversions (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). Children were permitted to leave school each morning at 10:30 during revival time and were led to the church to pray until noon (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.).

As indicated elsewhere, the church also was a primary social institution, hosting community gatherings throughout the year. Picnics, cake walks and box socials (see below) were often organized by church leaders, and young as well as old eagerly attended. As a youth, one local resident recalled that he went to church primarily "because the girls were there" (Maxwell Martin 1981, pers. comm.). For years the church also sponsored a summer camp for its younger members (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.).

About the time of World War II, "a rip roaring split" in the church developed over dancing. One group, which "delighted in having their dancing," decided to continue dancing over the objections of many members who opposed this diversion. After this squabble and a wartime loss in membership, the church began its decline as fewer and fewer young people remained to take the place of those who had once made the church the center of Roanoke's spiritual and social life (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). In 1981, a handful of the faithful, although no longer living in Roanoke, still met at the church each Sunday morning despite the fact that as a viable community, Roanoke had ceased to exist.

Much smaller than the Methodist Protestant Church, the Seventh Day Baptist Church (Figure 17) was equally well known in the area. Resting on a slight hill on the Bond property below Canoe Run, the church served a modest congregation of Bonds, Bees, Birds, Heveners, Shoemakers, Hardmans and a few other families, almost all of whom were intermarried. This church began with periodic meetings in the Richard Bond and Reuben Hevener homes, probably before the Civil War. After the war, the small church was built on land donated by Samuel Bond and was dedicated on 19 January 1872 (Cook 1924: 10).

A principal difference between Seventh Day Baptists and other Protestant churches is that the former celebrate the Sabbath, the first day of the week, on Saturday. Described by their Methodist Protestant neighbors as sincere and genuine (Matilda Fowler 1981, pers. comm.), the Seventh Day Baptists refuse to do any work or conduct any business on Saturday, although Freddie Bond's father reputedly once told his son not to let his religion get in the way of getting a job (Freddie and George Bond 1981, pers. comm.). Nevertheless, the Seventh Day Baptists of Roanoke were described as strict; most eschewed dancing and card playing, and most spent their hours on Saturday in

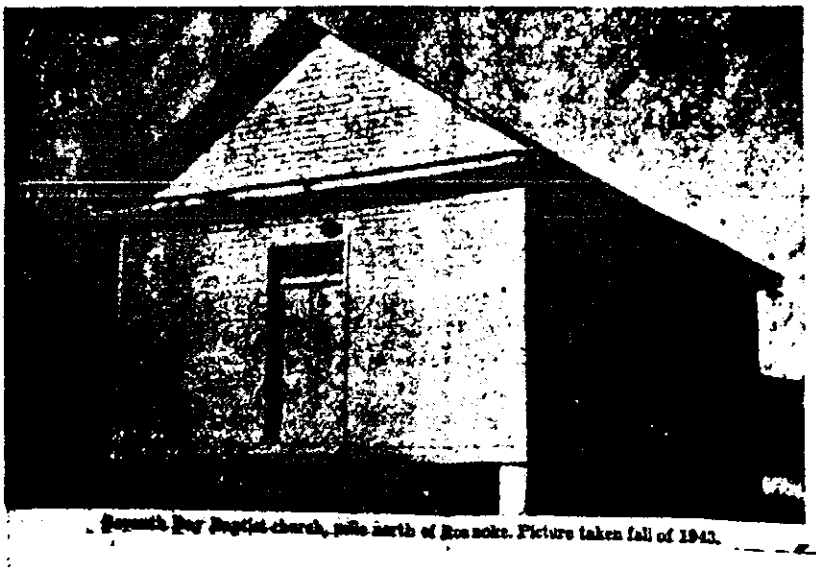

Figure 17. The Seventh Day Baptist Church built on Bond family land which was the place of Saturday worship for the Bond, Bee, Hevener and other families (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection).

reading the Bible (Frank and Opal Stoneking 1981, pers. comm.). They held a service one Saturday a month with a visiting preacher, but Sabbath school was held each Saturday at 10:00 A.M. (Barbara Hevener 1981, pers. comm.). Never a large group (perhaps as few as 25 at any one time), the church was dissolved in 1974, and only Freddie and George Bond remained from the congregation in 1981.

Catholic families such as the Feeneys, Whelans, Snyders and others went to church at St. Bridget's in Goosepen, West Virginia, about 4 miles from Roanoke. An old Weston mission church erected during the Civil War, it served Roanoke's earliest Catholic communicants until 1894 when a new church was built. People recall a priest named Father Thomas Aquinas Quirk with particular affection (Archie and Phyllis Ellis 1981, pers. comm.). He had come to Lewis County, West Virginia, in 1885 as the resident pastor of the Catholic missions, living at St. Bernard's on Loveberry Ridge. Serving a number of congregations in the county (see the discussion of St. Michael's Church in Michael and Carlisle 1979: 41-55), Father Quirk was remembered as a dynamic and resourceful man. He was responsible for the new St. Bridget's at Goosepen, West Virginia, and served there until his death in 1937, three years after he was invested as a Monsignor (Borchert 1967: 67).

Another important local institution was the village school. According to Roy Bird Cook (1924: 10), the first school in the area was held in the 1850s in a log structure located opposite the mouth of Canoe Run. This school was short-lived, and subsequent school sessions were held for a few years in the Union Meeting House. Here, Baptist services also were held from 1860 to 1880, and Imboden's Confederate raiders are said to have camped on the grounds in 1863 (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.). In 1867, another school was started in a cabin at the forks of Canoe Run. Cook (1924: 10) lists Americus Groves, Bird Jodon, Ella Hall, M. M. Eaton and George Cook as among the earliest teachers. There also was a school at White Oak Lick and, as mentioned earlier, Michael G. Bush held school at Canoe Run in a now-destroyed building which subsequently became a blacksmith shop.

According to Cook (1924: 13), a new one room school building was erected in Roanoke in 1882 adjoining the property on which the Methodist Protestant Church was dedicated four years later. Built on the spot where the Methodist Protestant Church parsonage was later erected, this one room school sometimes had as many as 50 students but only one teacher (Figure 18). Gordon Hall, aged 84 in 1981, went to the school through the eighth grade staying an additional year to become a teacher himself. Hall remembered the pot-bellied stove in the little schoolhouse and the school bell; boys and girls considered it an honor when they were allowed to ring it (Gordon and Nell Hall 1981, pers. comm.). Teachers from the first (Hattie Anderson) (Figure 19) through the eighth grades were strict; Hall recalls that they often were accompanied by a pliable switch, and one was even armed with a rubber hose! Amid the usual social and educational activities, according to Hall, a spelling bee was held each Friday (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.).

A new two room school was built a few years before World War I near the site of the most recent Roanoke school (Figure 20). James "Doc" Whelan went to this school and recalled its double seat arrangement and the class sizes of 25-30 students (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). Evaline Horner also attended this school, as did Ruth Posey Fox. Mrs. Fox described the school as having a central hall with single rooms on either side. There was no electricity in the building, and children went home for lunch at mid-day. There was a pot-bellied stove in each room, and respondents recalled that the children

Figure 18. A teacher and her students posing outside Roanoke's first one room schoolhouse (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection).

Figure 19. Hattie Anderson's one room schoolhouse in Roanoke as it looked ca. 1900 (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection derived from the Weston Independent 17 March 1954).

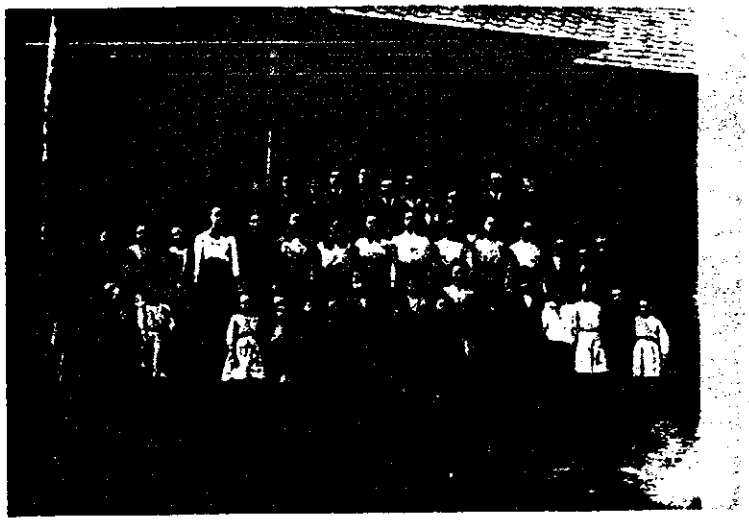

Figure 20. The two room Roanoke schoolhouse built ca. 1910. It had a double seat arrangement and accommodated as many as 30 students per class (Gordon Hall Photograph Collection).

threw crayons on them filling the classrooms with the special aroma of burning wax (Ruth Posey Fox 1981, pers. comm.).

For one year, Mrs. Ruth Posey Fox went to the new four room school built in the late 1930s near the older school. In addition to the classrooms, this school contained a lunch room and a kitchen. It remained in service only a few years, however. One night in the spring of 1942, Mrs. Ada Watson, (later, Ada Watson Kelly) whose husband operated a store outside Roanoke on U.S. Route 19, heard the school's asbestos siding crackle, and by the time anyone could do much about it, the school had burned to the ground (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.). After the fire, a member of Roanoke's now middle-aged residents recalled finishing the 1942 school year in the Odd Fellow's Lodge before the new brick school was opened in time for the fall term (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

Many of Roanoke's children did not go to school beyond the eighth grade, particularly in the community's earlier years. Those who did, such as Ruth Posey Fox, Evaline Bowyers Horner and Blaine Rollyson, Jr., among others, went to Walkersville, Weston or Burnsville, West Virginia, high schools. Mrs. Horner went to high school with Rollyson in Burnsville. They caught the train at the Roanville station at 8:00 A.M. and got back to the station at a little after five each evening. Later, Mrs. Horner attended Glenville State College and taught school one year in Roanoke (William and Evaline Horner 1981, pers. comm.). Rollyson also went on to college and served as principal of the new Roanoke school from 1946 (after returning from World War II with a Purple Heart) to 1964. During that period most of Roanoke's teenagers went to Lewis County High School in Weston, West Virginia (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

The new Roanoke school, which Blaine Rollyson, Jr. headed after the war, was built of brick and had eight rooms, including a cafeteria. By that time, Roanoke was already an older community with fewer youngsters, and many of Rollyson's students came to school from along Canoe Run or the Sand Fork River as well as from other outlying areas (Woodrow and Lucille Perrine 1981, pers. comm.). Yet, as always, the school remained a center for many social and community activities. Mrs. Margaret Warner Simon, who attended the school and worked in the cafeteria in 1981 (Mrs. Simon and her family were among the last people to leave Roanoke when the property was acquired for the Stonewall Jackson Lake Project.), recalled the greater school discipline of her childhood. As she has said, "You didn't yell in the halls in those days." She and others also recalled the special days at the school, when box socials, spelling bees, plays and church suppers all drew large crowds and doubtless added to the community spirit and neighborly values that for many years characterized the tiny village (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.).

For the children eagerly awaiting the free time and bright sun of summer, the "last day of school" exercises were awaited with particular anticipation. There were foot races, spelling games and ball games sometimes played with one's own schoolmates and occasionally between Roanoke and other nearby schools (Archie and Phyllis Ellis 1981, pers. comm.). During the school year, special programs at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter were highlights for the children, their parents and the entire community.

HEALTH CARE IN ROANOKE

As in the case of education, the Roanoke community regarded medicine as a critical service, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries when the town's isolation (particularly in the winter months) and the difficulty of travel on unpaved roads

limited ready access to Weston, West Virginia, and its physicians. However, up to the time of the Great Depression Roanoke families apparently received more than adequate medical care from local doctors. Indeed, when interviewed, the older residents of Roanoke recalled with warmth and satisfaction the doctors who for years brought them many kindnesses and the most personal medical attention.

Local historian Roy Bird Cook (1924) recorded the presence of five physicians who practiced in Roanoke. Drs. T. G. Edmiston and M. E. Whelan located in the town in the 1870s; they were followed by Drs. M. R. Casey, C. N. Reger and finally Dr. John O'Brien in 1923. An 1896 survey (Cook 1924: 21) of the village lists two physicians (probably Edmiston and certainly Whelan), and according to a few Roanoke residents, there was a "Doc" Moore who practiced medicine while running a general store in the 1930s (Cook 1924: 21).

James E. "Doc" Whelan, the only son of Roanoke's first and most respected physician, said that his father settled in Roanoke in about 1870 (but see above). While living in the Gillooly/Mullooly Hotel (see HABS No. WV-209-F), the elder Whelan practiced in a small office (see HABS No. WV-209-E) that he had built adjacent to the hotel and to the stately family home which was constructed between 1882 and 1888. "The office," Whelan recalled, "consisted of two 12' x 12' rooms . . ." ,
storage, the other for treating patients. Doctor Whelan's treatment room contained a medical bed and shelves for the doctor's medical supplies and drugs which he mixed himself.

Born in 1905, James E. "Doc" Whelan well remembered his father's busy days. His was a general practice, as were all of the medical practices throughout Roanoke's history. Dr. Whelan traveled throughout the village and its surrounding farms in his buggy to deliver babies, to tend to various illnesses and even on occasion to perform emergency surgery. His home and office were among Roanoke's busiest and best known locations. This was especially true during the flu epidemic of 1918 when, the younger Whelan recalled, his father often left home before daylight not returning until late that night. In his teens, "Doc" tended to his father's three "good" horses and buggy which, during the epidemic, the doctor drove over rough roads, through gulleys and ravines and out into the Roanoke countryside caring for the victims of that dreaded and often fatal disease. For those who did not survive, Whelan, a Catholic, carried in his medical bag a bottle of holy water for emergency incidents when he administered last rites; this was the same vial of holy water he sometimes used to baptize still-born infants (James and Bonnie Hawkins Fultineer 1981, pers. comm.).

"Doc" Whelan, whose aunts married into the Feeney and Gillooly families, is among Roanoke's foremost "raconteurs." He remembered that at one time his father owned farmland outside Roanoke and employed tenants to farm it. He also recalled the many occasions when he packed his father's bags, and particularly the day when his father and Dr. Casey amputated Ed Johnson's arm which had been mutilated in an attempt to catch a moving train (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.).

Dr. Whelan died in 1930. After his death, Mrs. Whelan (who died in 1963) and her son continued to live in the family home until it was purchased by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The doctor's office was converted into a small apartment which the Whelans rented until it, too, was sold to the Corps (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.).

According to "Doc" Whelan and others, Dr. M. R. Casey practiced in Roanoke from about the turn of the century until World War I. A few of Roanoke's oldest citizens were brought into the world by Casey, who delivered them, of course, in the home. Later, Casey became the Superintendent of the State Hospital in Weston, West Virginia.

Dr. C. N. Reger from Vandalia, West Virginia, lived in Roanoke from World War I through the 1920s. Reger had an office in his home which was located on a three acre tract near the Mary Conrad Park. This home had been built by a local blacksmith, Robert Coburn, as a one story dwelling/blacksmith shop. Dr. Reger added a second story with large rooms, a dining room, kitchen and bedrooms large enough to accommodate two large double beds. When Reger moved to Baltimore, his home was purchased by Bertha Post Brinkley and her husband (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.; Bertha Brinkley 1981, pers. comm.).

In about 1923 Dr. John O'Brien began to practice medicine in Roanoke. A veteran army doctor who had been exposed to poison gas in World War I, O'Brien has been described as a rough, brusque physician who would occasionally oblige a patient by pulling an infected tooth (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). O'Brien remained in Roanoke for only a few years, returning to his native Virginia where, his former patients were told, he soon died from war injuries (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

Oliver "Peck" Posey, Roanoke's postmaster in 1981, claimed that there were no doctors left in the town when he came to live there in 1931. Yet, there are those who recall that "Doc" Moore, who operated a general store in the building where the Rinehardts once lived and ran their store (see discussion of Tract 1542), was also a medical doctor (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.). However, none of those interviewed remembered ever having been treated by "Doc" Moore.

By the time that Jim McClain came to Roanoke in 1940, there definitely were no practicing physicians living in the village (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.). Doctors came from Weston, if necessary, just as on many previous occasions they had come by train to treat special cases in Roanoke (Woodrow and Lucille Perrine 1981, pers. comm.). Mary Alice Snyder, for example, was born a few years before World War I. Although she was delivered by Dr. Reger, another doctor was called from Weston to help with the breech birth (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). The doctor was met at the train station and taken by buggy to the patient's home (William and Evaline Horner 1981, pers. comm.). In the summers of the 1930s, doctors from Weston used automobiles to make their calls; in winter, the train was a primary mode of transport for Weston doctors.

After Dr. Whelan died in 1930, most babies were delivered in the Weston hospital, and the people of Roanoke began to travel more frequently to Weston for medical treatment. This reflects an increased nationwide trend toward the use of hospitals for birthing. Many people experienced difficulties in getting to and from Weston, and worse, were without the comfort and personal treatment they once had received at home from physicians who were also neighbors.

LOCAL STORES

Local businesses served as foci of social and economic activity; this is particularly true of the general stores where entrepreneurs and patrons conducted business around pot-bellied stoves surrounded by local citizens "neighboring" for a time before returning home with their merchandise. Whether they purchased anything or not, people gathered

in the stores to exchange small talk, family news, discuss the weather, the state of crops or to settle political arguments among other topics.

As early as 1890 there were at least four general stores in Roanoke owned and operated intermittently by H. L. Powers, I. C. Waldo, Enoch Gaston, Owen Mullooly, W. S. McQuain and Charles Horner. Horner operated his store while serving as the local postmaster. He was sheriff of Lewis County, West Virginia, when the Weston courthouse burned to the ground in 1886. At one time, Horner operated a store located across from the Methodist Protestant church; he subsequently sold it to Owen Mullooly. This store was later destroyed by fire.

Near the turn of the century, O. J. Whitesel (Figure 21) and R. W. Duncan opened a store in the Odd Fellows Lodge. From that time on, stores were opened and closed on the hall's first floor until the early 1980s. After the first owners, there was Mullooly, Rollyson, Chapman, Horner, Heflin and finally the last occupant, Ray Roach.

In 1891, Thomas Feeney opened a store near the Odd Fellows Lodge that was more splendid and offered a greater variety of goods. The Feeney store was a local landmark and gathering place for four decades (Figure 22). The Feeneys sold every conceivable product necessary for life in Roanoke: processed food, clothing, shoes, flour, salt, sugar, fat, animal feed and many other items that were then not made at home (William Horner 1981, pers. comm.). James "Doc" Whelan recollected that the Feeneys probably had an inventory of $15,000 to $20,000 at the time of World War I (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). The store even offered Chevrolet automobiles for sale in the 1920s (In 1924 the Feeneys opened a Chevrolet dealership in Weston.) and sold gasoline from a pump and drum operation (Charles Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.). The store also had a soda fountain, and after Sunday school each week the children often would run to see the train come in and then stop at Feeney's to have a soda. One night in 1928 or 1929, (the latter date, according to Blaine Rollyson, Jr. and Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.) after the Feeneys had leased the store to Andy Williams, it caught fire. Blaine Rollyson, Jr., remembered that evening. He was awakened by the blasts of shotguns and the peeling of church bells ringing to alert the village of the danger; the local firefighters, he noted, concentrated on saving the Rollyson store and other buildings nearby. The Feeney store and a house beside it both burned to the ground (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

Even before the village's roads were surfaced, local townsfolk could purchase most of what they needed in Roanoke. Besides the Feeney store, the Rollyson family operated a large store, at one time located in the old post office, and at another time in the building that housed the Odd Fellows Lodge. The Rollysons, like the Feeneys, carried a large assortment of goods including feed, a large supply of groceries, cooking ware, clothing, lanterns, nails and other hardware. The Rollysons bartered goods for eggs and chickens, sometimes shipping the latter to Baltimore (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). At a later time, Cecil Horner operated a store in the old post office (Figure 23). This meant that before postmaster Robert Posey could open each day, Horner had to open his store (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.).

In the winter, there was always a game of checkers or dominoes in the Rollyson store, and people sometimes waited for an hour or more to get seats to play. Social amenities, card games and other diversions were all part of "shopping" at other Roanoke establishments through the course of the year, particularly in the period before World War II. Charles Hawkins (with a large family) operated a store across from his home

Figure 21. A photograph taken in the late 19th century of Whitesel's store and a group of Roanoke patrons. The store occupied the first floor of the Odd Fellows Lodge (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection derived from the Weston Independent 17 March 1954).

Figure 22. Feeney's store (at right) located near the old bridge and the railroad depot at Roanoke. Before the store burned in 1928 or 1929, people considered it the largest and best-stocked emporium in Roanoke (James Whelan Photograph Collection).

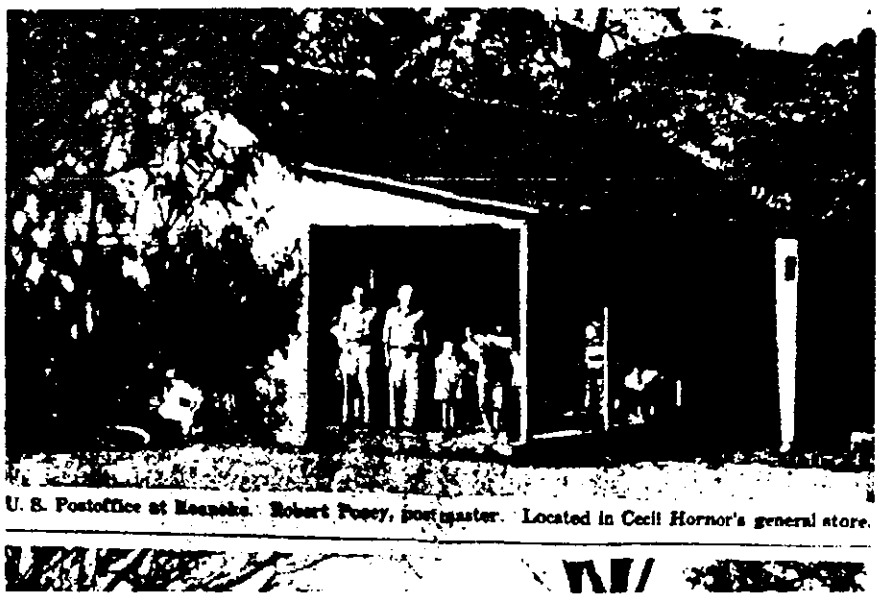

Figure 23. U.S. Post Office building in the 1920s and site of Cecil Horner's feed store (Alta Anderson Photograph Collection).

where he sold candy, feed, bread, dried beans and other groceries. Hawkins' store was not built by Charles Hawkins, however, but by James Bosely who erected the structure in 1924 on the opposite side of the Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike and across from the hotel where he resided. Bosely used the store building to sell cattle feed and also to store the chickens and eggs which he huckstered in the Oil Creek area. When Bosely declared bankruptcy in 1929, both the hotel and store property came into the hands of Hawkins who then transformed the feed store into a tiny grocery. Charles Malcolm reminisced that there was usually a crowd in Hawkins' little store, especially in winter when people would congregate around the pot-bellied stove and "neighbor" until late in the evening (Charles Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.). Others remembered the Hawkins store for the dances held there (Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.) and for the quality of the candy sold there (Mrs. Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.).

There were other stores which operated in Roanoke through the years. Next to the Odd Fellows Lodge and across the road from the present (1981) post office, the Rinehardt family ran a store on the Floda Nay property, later purchased by Cesa Marsh. The Rinehardts lived in the building in the 1920s and sold groceries and building materials, even ordering special items such as stoves for their customers (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.; Bertha Brinkley 1981, pers. comm.). There also was a special section of the store set aside where Mrs. Rinehardt sold hats and other specialty items (Bertha Brinkley 1981, pers. comm.). Later, the Chapman family and Bennie Hore (who married into the Chapman family) operated a store in the building before Hore went back to his native England early during World War II, and before Chapman's death shortly thereafter. Hore's specialty was making potato chips which he sold in the store (Bonnie Hawkins Fultineer 1981, pers. comm.). Later, "Doc" Moore had a store in the building (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

One of the village's earliest businesses was a millinery shop owned by Miss Emma Craig around the turn of the century. Later, Gordon Hall's sister sewed dresses and made hats there. After World War I, Miss Craig moved to Parkersburg, West Virginia, and Jim Shackelford operated a barber shop and restaurant in the building (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). Roanoke residents recall that Shackelford used to close his business at noon each day and go home for lunch (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.)! Shackelford later moved his business to another building across the street which had housed a shoemaker's shop and telephone switchboard

Zeke Bee was the village shoemaker who occupied the aforementioned shop. A Seventh Day Baptist who married into the Bond family, Bee's shop was in the same building shared with the People's Telephone Company switchboard. Bee, an inveterate tobacco chewer whose cluttered shop floor often reflected his habit, was so popular that the pathway and area around his home was dubbed "Zekeville" by his Roanoke neighbors (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.).

For other needs particularly suited to rural life, there was a combination blacksmith shop and gristmill operated by the Coburn family in the 1920s and thereafter (Charles and Madeline Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.). After making a small fortune from wildcat gas drilling, Coburn moved to Parkersburg, West Virginia (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.). Nora Duvall's father, Al Helmick, also operated a gristmill in Roanoke. Located across the road from the two room school (see Figure 20) and operated by a gasoline motor, Helmick's mill, like Coburn's, offered an important service

In a town where subsistence crops were staples for the winter diet. Helmick provided his milling service for payment in corn which he then sold or fed to his livestock (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.; Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.). People also would bring cornstalks to Helmick from which he made brooms (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.).

An unusual (for Roanoke) and short-lived business was the local mortuary operated in the 1930s by Bill Francis. Above the garage where Francis kept his hearse was the room where Mrs. Francis held square dances. The younger set in Roanoke used to delight in taking breaks from their square dancing to sneak downstairs and peek at the hearse (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). Francis conducted very few funerals; in fact, most of the older residents of Roanoke do not remember funerals being held any place other than at the homes of individuals (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

Perhaps the most atypical business in Roanoke was operated by Charles Kerns who sold furs, diamond rings and watches (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). Through widespread advertising and selling (mostly by mail), Kerns made a great deal of money retailing furs purchased from Canada through a mail-order house in New York City (William Homer 1981, pers. comm.). Local postmaster Oliver "Peck" Posey remembered that Kerns sometimes took in as much as $20,000 a week, operating with no apparent system of bookkeeping except for his late night use of the post office adding machine to tally his receipts (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.).

In Roanoke's final years the two most prosperous businesses were operated by the Stoneking and Watson families. Frank and Opal Stoneking ran a combination store/restaurant/gas station (Figure 25) on U.S. Route 19 next door to the Freddie Bond homestead. While people gathered to talk about politics or the weather, they could purchase beer and food from the Stoneking's whose store had been built originally by one of the Heveners (Frank and Opal Stoneking 1981, pers. comm.; Matilda Fowler 1981, pers. comm.). The Watson's store was operated by Wallace and Ada Grobe Watson from 1938 until the former's death in 1959; after Wallace's death, others ran the store for a few more years, but it no longer was profitable. Located on U.S. Route 19 above the village, Watson's store sold groceries, canned goods, feed, nails and meat, as well as soda, penny candy and ice cream (Figure 26). While some customers purchased almost all their supplies from the Watsons, many others shopped in Weston (where they could not receive credit) and afterwards bought items on credit from the Watsons. In some cases, the Watsons were forced to sue for payment (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.). For awhile, Watson, together with Charles Malcolm, operated a gristmill which was located in a log house next to the store. The mill, Malcolm recalled, was powered by a Buick "straight eight" engine (Charles Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.). Malcolm and Watson were also partners in the ownership of a truck which they used to haul produce from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as well as watermellons, other fruit and vegetables from Georgia and other southern states (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.).

The oldest family-operated business in Roanoke's history is the Hevener orchard. Established in 1898 by Reuben Hevener's sons Mansfield and John J. Hevener (Figure 27), the orchard business has been in the family through four generations. After working for his father, Mansfield, a few years, John L. Hevener purchased land from his uncle, John J. Hevener, in 1915 and built the homestead which today remains the site of the family home and orchard. It was John L. Hevener who built the orchard from a small operation (Figure 28) into a large business, that produced in 1958 over 1200 bushels of apples. With his son, Willard, who married and brought his wife, Barbara, into the business in 1958, John L. Hevener operated the orchard until his death in 1962. Earlier, he began to

Figure 25. The Stoneking store and service station. The store operated in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to general merchandise and beer, Stoneking, a sportsman, carried a limited line of fishing and hunting equipment (Frank and Opal Stoneking Photograph Collection).

Figure 26. Wallace Watson's store and gasoline station on U.S. Route 19. From 1941 to 1959 Wallace Watson and his wife, Ada, sold groceries, candy and hardware for cash and on credit (Lawrence G. Smith Photograph Collection).

Figure 27. Photo of John J. Hevener (1885-1962). It was John J. Hevener who with his father, Reuben, and brother, Mansfield, established the Hevener orchard (Barbara Hevener Photograph Collection).

Figure 28. A horse-drawn barrel-type orchard sprayer driven by Mansfield Hevener (Barbara Hevener Photograph Collection).

develop his own special apple--the West Virginia Red York --which was patented the year after his death, the first federal patent ever issued for an apple developed in the State of West Virginia (Figure 29).

The business thereafter passed to Willard and Barbara Hevener (Figure 30); they further developed the operation until Willard's death in 1977 (Weston Democrat 12 March 1980). By that time the orchard had reached peak production, numbering over 5600 pieces of shrubbery and over 3000 apple trees (Barbara Hevener 1981, pers. comm.).

HOME PRODUCTION

As indicated above, during the 19th century and the first four decades of the 20th century, Roanoke shops and stores such as those owned by the Whitesels, Duncans, Feeneys, Rollysons, Coburns and Rinehardts offered a variety of goods and services. The economy of rural Roanoke nevertheless demanded that families depend to a large degree on their own creative energies and labors for day-to-day survival. Until World War II, Roanoke families relied heavily on home production for such basic goods as clothing, soap and bedclothes. As indicated in the discussion on Roanoke stores (see above), local merchants carried few finished products until the 1920s, and even then the selection was limited. A subsistence level economy characterized most of the area of the Collins Settlement District. There were few paydays and, therefore, little hard money with which to purchase ready-made clothing, soap or other products. The Whitesel, Feeney, Rollyson, Rinehardt, Watson and other stores carried mainly work clothing as well as bolts of fabric that Roanoke women used to make clothing for their children and themselves. The local blacksmith, Bob Coburn, provided the tools to repair farm equipment, and the shoemaker, Zeke Bee, kept harnesses and shoes in repair. Although Roanoke at one time boasted its own millinery shop and later served as the headquarters for a furrier, in fact it had a simple economy where home manufacturing played a key economic role. Children's clothing was almost always homemade. Ruth Post's mother made all of the clothing for her large family, and several respondents recalled feed sacks converted into clothing (George Post, Nora Duvall and Bertha Brinkley 1981, pers. comm.).

Quilting also was a commonplace task in the village. Jim McClain's wife still owns a closet full of homemade quilts (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.), and other respondents volunteered to display their own family heirlooms. Lucille Perrine remembered the quilting frame erected in the Odd Fellows Lodge (see discussion of Tract 1540) where the Rebekahs could come each day to work on a quilt (Woodrow and Lucille Perrine 1981, pers. comm.). Jim McClain's wife noted that "Someone set up a frame in their house, and people would go and help someone quilt all day long." In 1981, Jim McClain saw it as a lost art (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.). There was some rug making in Roanoke but was said to be not as common there as elsewhere in West Virginia (Woodrow Perrine 1981, pers. comm.).

Everyone also remembered lye soap as a product made in the home. Only one respondent spoke of a home industry in which people earned money. Freddie Bond recalled that around 1900 his grandmother Bond had a knitting machine in her home. A company supplied her with the work, and she made fabric on the machine which was picked up periodically by a company representative (Freddie Bond 1981, pers. comm.).

Food production ranked higher than homemade clothing and soap in the order of the pre-industrial economy. Gardens were universal in 19th and 20th century Roanoke, and

Figure 29. John L. Hevener examining his patented West Virginia York apples (Barbara Hevener Photograph Collection).

Figure 30. Mr. and Mrs. Willard Hevener. They represent the third generation of Heveners to operate the Hevener nursery.

almost everyone raised animals for home consumption. In addition, many people raised sorghum for molasses, and it was not uncommon to see a crop of tobacco drying in a Roanoke backyard.

Gardens were critical to the local economy. Whether one lived in the village or on a farm in the region, a good or bad garden determined whether the family ate well or ill over the winter. Families raised tomatoes, corn, cabbage, beans, peas, potatoes and, as noted above, sorghum and tobacco. Everything (the latter excepted) was canned. Several men spoke of their wives canning over 200 jars in a season. Nora Duvall exclaimed that her mother pickled beans, dried and canned beans, and the family ate beans and more beans (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.)! Of course, "everyone" made saukerkraut (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.).

Not all of the canning carried out in Roanoke involved vegetables. Roanoke people also canned meat. Most families kept at least chickens and hogs. Some had a cow for milking. Families on outlying farms raised beef cattle and usually slaughtered a steer or two for the winter (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

People who lived in Roanoke could rent land for $0.50 a year outside the town on which they grazed their milk cows. Of course, in the 19th and 20th centuries many families also kept a horse. Often, families might share space in a barn where they quartered their horse and cow (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.).

In the general absence of refrigeration (on which no information has come to light), hog butchering started about the first of November, or on the first cold day in that month; it ran until Thanksgiving (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). Eighty-year old Nora Duvall recalled that the hog was first shot and then "stuck to get the blood out." The hog killing involved from four to five families who helped each other in the killing and processing. Beef killing, on the other hand, was not a communal event because it was considered to be "too easy" (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). Processing a "good-sized" hog took three to four days. "Today," claimed Jim McClain, "you can take a hog to a cannery in Buckhannon or Weston, West Virginia, and process 102 quarts of sausage in a day" (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.). After the killing, a rope was put through the hog's snout, and it was dunked in a barrel of boiling water. Following that, the hog was laid out on a platform and scraped to remove the bristles. Next, the carcass was hung up and slit lengthwise. The fat was stripped off by the women and rendered for lard. Some people stripped out the entrails and used them for sausage casing, but most people in Roanoke seemed to have knitted white pokes (a cloth casing) for sausage. Some cooked the head of the hog for mincemeat. People often sent the tail to a friend or acquaintance just "for fun." Hams were either sugar cured and/or smoked. Many people smoked their hams with apple wood, hickory or sassafras, and everyone considered the taste of smoked ham and bacon incomparable (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.).

Cows were kept for fresh milk from which butter but rarely cheese was made. Some respondents claimed that the Roanoke butter was not cleaned or washed sufficiently. Mary Alice Snyder said that her mother (who came from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) washed their butter time and time again and that it was clear and good (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.).

In addition to gardening and the raising and slaughtering of hogs and beef, Roanoke people, especially children, went berrying (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.). It amounted to a chore, although some children were permitted to sell what they picked (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.). Jim McClain told how he picked 20 to 30 gallons

of berries and took them to the train station to sell (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.). Likewise, Nora Duvall and Ada Watson Kelly recalled picking gallons of wild blueberries, huckleberries and blackberries. As a youth, Gordon Hall picked so many blueberries with his sister and mother that by the time they had prepared the blueberry jam, he was too tired of the berries to enjoy the finished product (Gordon and Nell Hall 1981, pers. comm.).

Although respondents argued that perhaps only five or six families in Roanoke raised cane and made sorghum molasses, the production of this product seems vividly etched in the memories of Roanoke residents. Freddie Bond made 105 gallons of sorghum molasses around 1927, and the Horners also raised cane and made sugar (Freddie Bond 1981, pers. comm.). "Someone" came around each sugar harvest time with evaporating pans. The children of the village would strip the cane and cut it up. Then, they would sit on a stool and watch a horse walk in a circle around the grinding stone of the horse mill granulating the cane. The ground cane was then boiled down in the evaporating pans (William Horner 1981, pers. comm.). By the 1960s, however, very few people made molasses although a few families made sugar out of maple sap.

There was another use for some of the homegrown crops, especially corn, potatoes and apples; all of these crops could be converted into alcoholic beverages. A few people made "potato jack," while others favored hard cider. The more "notorious" made corn liquor or "white lightning" (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). Mary Alice Snyder freely admitted that her grandfather made corn whiskey for sale, she claimed (and others supported her), to a distinguished Weston clientele. It was, of course, an illegal business in the 1920s, and on occasion, the Weston sheriff took the train to Roanoke to investigate this infraction of the law. Once, Mary Alice Snyder recalled that as a train passed across their property, someone tossed off a newspaper bearing a note of warning that the sheriff was aboard with the intention of raiding the still. "Grandad covered all the booze with manure, and when the sheriff arrived, grandad was busy just raking that manure" (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.).

RECREATION

As was typical of most 19th and early 20th century rural communities where labor-saving technology was rare, work consumed most of the hours of the day for young and old alike. People did seek entertainment and recreation in Roanoke. Until the recent period, the people of Roanoke entertained themselves at home or through various community activities (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). In the absence of commercially produced toys or games, the children of the village created their own fun, usually finding many things to do after school in the fall and spring, and/or after completing their chores on summer mornings (Frank and Opal Stoneking 1981, pers. comm.). They played marbles, "ring-around-the-rosie," skipping and dancing games; they enjoyed numerous rounds of tag and chase (even inventing some of their own like "What's my name, what am I doing?") and found time to wade and fish in local streams (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.). In winter, sled riding with parents and older brothers and sisters was in vogue, and in summer, like many other American children, they spent hours playing baseball on nearby lots and fields (Gordon and Nell Hall 1981, pers. comm.). In Roanoke, younger children often played "jail," a game in which one group would "capture" another and "throw" them into the school's coal house for safe keeping (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). When radio and television became available in the 1920s and mid-1950s, respectively, children would visit those neighbors who had sets and eat popcorn and other treats while listening to or watching their favorite program

Matilda Fowler 1981, pers. comm.). James "Doc" Whelan (1981, pers. comm.) claimed that he owned the first television set in the town.

Older children naturally enjoyed greater freedom and a wider variety of activities than did younger ones. Teenagers in Roanoke spent many summer hours swimming at Corley's Rocks where a succession of floods had created a deep hole below the Rhodes property on the West Fork River (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). Young people happily congregated around a diving board that someone had made, and they sometimes held picnics and hot dog roasts there. One former Roanoke teenager of the 1930s recalled that everyone would contribute a dime and there would be hot dogs and soft drinks (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). Occasionally, when gas wells were struck, young people would dress chickens, place them in a basket and cook them over the steam generated at the wellhead (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). Teenage parties were often held at home, and sometimes featured a serving of cake and pickles, a custom in the area (Alta Anderson and Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). For many years Roanoke had a baseball team (Figure 31), a "fine one" many recalled; visiting teams would travel by train to play on the field by Gordon Hall's house or on the manicured diamond that William Horner built above the Rollyson house (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). In the 1930s the Works Progress Administration (WPA) also organized a team in Roanoke (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

In winter months, Roanoke sledding parties often lasted until midnight. Starting at Gordon Hall's house, the young people would maneuver their sleds over the snow and ice all the way down to the Riddle home (the former Michael G. Bush home) which sat close to the banks of the river (Frank Stonekíng 1981, pers. comm.). In the fall of the year there were corn roasts, hay rides and social activities in the school (Ruth Posey Fox 1981, pers. comm.).

The recreation of adults, much like that of their children, was confined for the most part to Roanoke itself until after World War II. There were numerous fox chases, "turkey shoots" and horseshoe contests; years ago, there were barn raisings, quilting and sewing bees, and many years ago, the village had its own band as well as the Hevener family band for dances and parades (Figures 32, 33) (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.; Barbara Hevener 1981, pers. comm.).

A favorite diversion was to "neighbor" on front porches, street corners, in the stores or at the post office. There was a steady round of conversation in the local stores and shops, and many hours were spent playing checkers or dominoes in Hawkin's, Rollyson's or Watson's stores. Adults, much like their children, listened to radios and watched television when those forms of communication became generally available. The Stonekings had a television in their store, but Ada Watson Kelly recalled with a grin that her first husband, Wallace Watson, had to remove the TV from their store because "We couldn't get any business done" (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.).

All of the former citizens of Roanoke interviewed could recall favorite pastimes; the diversions most fondly remembered, however, were box socials, cake walks, square dancing and a card game called "set-back" (see below). Box socials and cake walks were so common and included so many members of the community that they became traditions passed from generation to generation (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.) As such, they are discussed more fully later in this history.

Square dancing, although remembered well by Roanoke's citizens, included fewer members of the community. At first it was particularly those of Irish extraction as well

Figure 31. The Roanoke baseball team in 1910 (James McClain Photograph Collection).

Figure 32. The Roanoke Band ca. 1888 (James Whelan Photograph Collection). Front row (l-r): Charles Watson, Henry Coock, Charles Rhodes, Ray R. Horner, John H. Conrad, Dr. M. E. Whelan, Hugh Oden Marion. Back row (l-r): W. L. Post, William Wilson, John Sweker, W. R. Bond, Mike (name illegible), C. C. (Pete Conrad), (Unknown).

Figure 33. The Hevener family band in the early 20th century. Front row (l-r): Mansfield Hevener, John Lee, Olkey O.; Back row (l-r): Claude F., Charles Watson (Barbara Hevener Photograph Collection).

as those who were willing to defy the church and other moral leaders critical of this diversion who engaged in square dancing. Indeed, as has been noted, considerable friction occurred in the Methodist Protestant Church when Mary Conrad (not related to the Postmistresses) and others promoted square dancing. For a time the issue of square dancing created a schism in the community, alienating dancers from church members who viewed dancing as "a bit of the devil's work" (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). In any case, the Conrad and Francis families took turns holding square dances in their homes on Saturday night (Woodrow Perrine 1981, pers. comm.). Conrad even commercialized the events, opening the rooms in his house, clearing away the furniture, preparing sandwiches and charging a modest fee which was "never too much" (Ruth Posey Fox 1981, pers. comm.). After World War II, Roanoke's younger set square danced at the Bright Star Park skating rink on U.S. Route 19 across from Stoneking's store before the rink burned in the 1970s (Margaret Simon Warner 1981, pers. comm.).

Unquestionably, the most popular "home" entertainment in Roanoke from at least the turn of the century to the present was the card game called "set-back." All of the former residents interviewed seemed fanatically devoted to the game (James McClain 1981, pers. comm.). Despite the admonitions of church leaders and some parents, many of Roanoke's couples from the early 1900s onward spent hours playing set-back (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). Indeed, few other features of life in Roanoke were remembered so vividly by its former citizens (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). As Madeline Malcolm (1981, pers. comm.) put it, she "would rather play set-back than eat." Set-back is usually played with a partner; it involves bidding and trump cards, and seems somewhat akin to pinochle. Married couples especially would spend hours visiting or "neighboring" with others around a game of set-back. However, this does not seem to have excluded bachelors like James "Doc" Whelan from engaging in this town's favorite pastime (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.).

SPECIAL DAYS

The popular diversions of set-back and square dancing were complimented by the observance of special days, such as Christmas, Easter and Halloween which played an important part in the lives of the hardworking rural population of Roanoke, West Virginia. It comes as no surprise that Christmas was the year's holiest and most celebrated day (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.). In the recollections of most former residents of the village, it was first and most importantly a religious observance, a community event generally devoid of the commercialization that often now characterizes this holiday. Almost all of those interviewed recalled the special programs held at the Odd Fellows Lodge, the church and the school, all of which emphasized the religious theme of the season. The church often presented a Christmas play (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.), and sometimes a Christmas tree was decorated at the church as part of the season's ritual (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). The church and school sponsored community singing programs (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.), and the local 4-H club also held its special Christmas program (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

Roanoke's young people went to bed early on Christmas Eve (Gordon and Nell Hall 1981, pers. comm.) so that they might begin the next day's celebration early in the morning. The gifts they received were ordinarily extremely modest by today's standards (Maxwell and Enola Martin 1981, pers. comm.). They were few in number and often were made at home (Frank and Opal Stoneking 1981, pers. comm.). There were a few toys (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.) and sometimes a homemade sled, doll or a teddy bear

(Ruth Posey Fox 1981, pers. comm.). A doll with hair was a very special and rare present for the girls.

Gifts for both children and adults ordinarily were comprised of clothing (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.) or a special pair of store-bought shoes (Maxwell and Enola Martin 1981, pers. comm.). In addition, there often would be candy, oranges and other fruit (Charles and Madeline Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.). Most of Roanoke's older residents stressed that the exchanges of love and community spirit expressed the truest meaning of Christmas as they remembered it.

In private homes, Christmas trees were not common prior to World War I (Nora Duvall 1981, pers. comm.). On occasion, a family went into the countryside to cut their own tree (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.). Families usually decorated the tree with popcorn, paper rings and special trinkets that were saved from year to year (William and Evaline Horner 1981, pers. comm.). Most of those interviewed did not recall having Christmas stockings; one person remembered that she did have a small wooden chest that she decorated with holly each year (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.) and which functioned much like a Christmas stocking.

Christmas dinner was the highlight of the day's secular events (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.). According to the tastes of each family, there would be turkey, country ham or chicken usually accompanied by delicious dressing and gravy plus a variety of home-canned vegetables and fruits (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.). It was the big Christmas meal that brought to the table not only each family but also the relatives and loved ones who came to Roanoke to share in the year's premier celebration (Woodrow and Lucille Perrine 1981, pers. comm.).

Although Christmas stood first in importance, other special days brought Roanoke families together in celebration. Thanksgiving was a time when family members gathered for an annual fall feast. Most people butchered their hogs and cattle at this time. In addition to eating their own stock of beef, pork or turkey, the men often went hunting and sometimes brought home special game for their wives to cook and their family to feast upon (Barbara Hevener 1981, pers. comm.).

On Easter Sunday, church attendance was unusually high, (though no moreso than at Christmas) and afterwards the children were treated to Easter egg hunts. They searched in the haystacks, under porches and through hiding places in the house seeking the hidden eggs (Maxwell and Enola Martin 1981, pers. comm.). Before World War II, the eggs were colored with a mixture of charcoal and onion skins, but more recently Easter baskets provided the usual delight for the children of the village (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.).

There was usually a picnic, a ball game, and occasionally a family reunion on the Fourth of July (Oliver "Peck" Posey 1981, pers. comm.). Family reunions were held in the local school building, and picnics often took place at the Brier Hill School below Roanoke in the Seventh Day Valley (Charles Malcolm 1981, pers. comm.). People would travel to Weston, West Virginia, for a fireworks display or join other towns in picnics where local politicians always would appear. The town picnic as a feature of Roanoke community life appears to have been less common after World War I (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.).

Older residents recalled that as teenagers they sometimes "acted up a bit" on Halloween. Juvenile pranksters would travel through the village upsetting outhouses,

throwing cabbages at their "victims" and setting hay wagons atop buildings (Ruth Posey Fox 1981, pers. comm.). Those adults considered to be real "grouches" were harrassed more than others; a local store owner lost his special chair to the top of a flagpole, and his delivery wagon disappeared for days. It was later discovered on the school porch (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). A local physician's buggy also was victimized one Halloween; a mill operator's wagon was the target on another All Hallow's Eve (Gordon and Nell Hall 1981, pers. comm.). Some respondents believed that the pranks of these long-ago Halloweens were worse than in more recent years. Others said that only the local "grouches" were bothered.

While there were many recollections among Roanoke's people regarding traditional events such as Halloween, not one person remembered attending a wedding except his or her own (William Horner, Ruth Post, Gordon and Nell Hall 1981, pers. comm.). Couples who wished to marry secured a license, found a preacher or local Justice of the Peace and were quietly married without much ceremony. Some were married at home, others went to Ohio to avoid the waiting period necessary in West Virginia. "Whatever," some residents said, "was the quickest." In at least two respondents' cases, the couple kept the marriage a secret, because to have divulged it would have jeopardized the bride's teaching job in West Virginia. It is important to recall that before World War II, a married woman could not teach in West Virginia (Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.). Even after that time, the typical Roanoke wedding seems to have remained a modest affair involving little ceremony and attracting little attention.

In distinction to weddings, many of Roanoke's older people recalled that, like Christmas and other occasions, funerals were usually community observances. Before being taken to the church, the deceased was laid out at home where most of the funeral ceremonies and rituals took place. Wakes, found among several denominations, often lasting two days and nights, were characterized by large amounts of food brought to the home of the bereaved by sympathizers and loving neighbors. People would stay up all night eating, talking and paying respects to the dead throughout the wake. Mourning also took place when the body was taken to the church. Here, there would be singing, eulogies and a final viewing of the body. Then the funeral procession would wind its way to the local cemetery where the casket was lowered into a grave usually dug by a group of friends from the village (George and Ruth Post 1981, pers. comm.).

Although most aspects of the funeral took place in the home of the deceased before the church service and the subsequent burial, for a brief period in the 1920s, Roanoke had a local undertaker, Will Francis. As stated earlier, no one included among the respondents interviewed in the course of the present work remembered Francis conducting a funeral (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). However, a few respondents believed that he may have supervised a dozen or so funerals before he closed this business and turned his parlor into a dance hall (William and Evaline Horner 1981, pers. comm.). In the period after World War II, Roanoke funerals became more formal and were conducted at funeral homes in Weston and elsewhere.

THREE ROANOKE TRADITIONS

Holiday celebrations, weddings and funerals reflect local values and traditions--patterns of rural culture transferred from generation to generation. Data on three other customs or traditions emerged from the lengthy oral interviews conducted with past residents of Roanoke and its surrounding area. All three of these customs involve the mating cycle of courtship and marriage. Strangely, traditions that one might think would be common to the small community (and are in many)--picnics, Fourth of July

celebrations, the honoring of war dead, celebrations of the harvest, etc.--seem muted if not non-existent in the oral record of Roanoke. A good deal of "wheedling" by the interviewers wrested from the respondents nothing of significance along these lines. However, data on several community traditions did emerge from the interviews. For example, everyone interviewed recalled box socials and cake walks. These have been discussed previously but deserve elaboration here.

Eyes gleaming, Gordon Hall described box socials in Roanoke as "one of the main things" (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). There can be little doubt that this afforded an important opportunity for young people to get together (Maxwell Martin 1981, pers. comm.). Both cake walks and box socials were identified either with the church or with the school. Although respondents seemed to recall that the events were held more frequently in the school, Blaine Rollyson, Jr., vividly reminisced about box socials at the church followed by a "cake walk around the church pews" (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.).

Box socials and cake walks in Roanoke appear to have been two traditions that functioned as much to facilitate money-raising as they did social participation (Blaine Rollyson, Jr. 1981, pers. comm.). There is nothing particularly unique about that; many American traditions from Christmas to the Fourth of July have been exploited for their money-making value. As Gordon Hall depicted the box social and the cake walk, "You paid so much to walk, and (so much) to try to get your girl's lunch box" (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). The girls made up lunches packed in cardboard boxes which consisted primarily of a sandwich or a piece of chicken, a piece of fruit and cake. They brought the box to the social carefully masked with bows and wrapping. An auctioneer then asked for bids on the disguised box lunches, while the boys quizzed their girl friends to disclose some information on which lunch they had packed (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.). Money raised in this way was used for a variety of church purposes.

At the box social, someone always baked a big cake as the prize for the cake walk. After the social, couples lined up to walk around a circle. Another person stood with a broom. When the music stopped or someone shouted the signal, the broom was dropped and wherever it fell, that couple was awarded the cake. Socials and cake walks persisted in Roanoke until the 1970s (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.). In the 1960s they were more often sponsored by the Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A.) of the local school, and there was always a cake walk at the P.T.A. Carnival.

Both box socials and cake walks fit into the body of traditions and social rituals that surround courting. All respondents, no matter what his or her age, insisted that there were very few things for a young couple to do in Roanoke and very few places to go. Before the automobile age (the late 1930s in Roanoke), a young suitor often had to ride horseback many miles to court his lady, especially if she lived in the Skin Creek District or other communities outside Roanoke proper (William Horner 1981, pers. comm.). With any luck, her parents had a parlor. If there was no separate parlor, it may have been the young couple's good fortune that the girl's parents did not sleep in the living room (as often was the case.).

Among the Roanoke respondents, there was considerable disagreement concerning how closely parents chaperoned the courting ritual in Roanoke. Some of those interviewed insisted that couples were strictly chaperoned, while others strongly downplayed any idea that young people were chaperoned (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.). According to Alta Anderson and Ada Watson Kelly, younger (or older) sisters tagged after the couple. However, Ada felt that an older sister paved the way for a

younger one, so that by the time the latter had her first beau, her parents excercised little supervision (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.).

Despite the limited opportunity for entertainment during adolescence, there were opportunities for young couples to get together. Many of the activities centered around church life and have been discussed previously. Church revivals afforded another opportunity for socializing. At each revival, boys often would use the church hymnal to smuggle love notes to girl friends. After the revival, couples tarried awhile--walking to Feeney's for an ice cream soda or taking a stroll along the banks of the West Fork River.

Matilda "Tilly" Fowler saw the courting cycle change in the 1950s. At that time, there was "more pairing off." Courting, it seems, was by then less a community affair revolving around box socials and revival "hymnal passing." By the 1950s, the liberating influence of the automobile and the skating rink across from Stoneking's store gave young people a chance to escape the watchful eyes of their parents. By the time a girl was courted seriously, there seems to have been little parental supervision (Matilda Fowler 1981, pers. comm.).

For those who developed a more enduring relationship, the courting cycle lasted one or two years, followed, as discussed previously, by a simple marriage ceremony either at church or a Justice of the Peace.

One of the most important Roanoke traditions connected with the rite of marriage followed the wedding. This was the serenade, a ritual which can be traced back to the mid-late Middle Ages; it was originally an attempt by the community to reassert at least symbolic authority over the family at a time when absolute monarchy and the beginnings of industrialism seemed to challenge traditional community control (Shorter 1975). In Roanoke, the serenade persisted into the late 1940s. Both Matilda Fowler and Woodrow Perrine stated that Matilda's parents, the Hardmans, were the last couple in Roanoke to be serenaded; this was in 1950 (Woodrow and Lucille Perrine 1981, pers. comm.).

In earlier years, according to James "Doc" Whelan, "if they stayed (in town) all night (after the wedding) they got serenaded." This was a raucous greeting that the couple received from their friends and neighbors after their marriage, and it surely was one of the most remembered occasions in the community's life prior to World War II. Indeed, it appears that the serenade substituted for the real wedding feast (Gordon and Nell Hall 1981, pers. comm.) that was the custom elsewhere. The serenade "was it," recalled one former resident of Roanoke (Mary Alice Snyder 1981, pers. comm.). Apparently, the only couples who avoided the serenade were those who for one reason or another kept their marriage secret.

The serenade usually occurred a few evenings after the couple was married and had moved into their own home or into the home of one of their parents. The newly married couple were greeted at night by outlandish noises from people running around the house shaking sleigh bells, firing shotguns, hitting "tin" pans and even circular saw blades--all of which presented a symphonic expression of their shared happiness (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.).

Most couples who had been serenaded eventually "showed" themselves and faithful to the tenets of the ancient tradition, offered the revellers cake, ice cream, coffee, candy and cigars. These gifts were meant to appease the serenaders. Newlyweds who were too slow to respond or who refused to "surrender" to the revellers, could be subjected to the harsh demands of their friends and neighbors. Unyielding couples either

w[illegible] ridden through the town in a wheelbarrow, or as James "Doc" Whelan put it, "We ode 'em on a rail" (James Whelan 1981, pers. comm.). One respondent recalled that she and her new husband locked the door to the house, but the serenaders came through the window and "We treated," she said (Ada Watson Kelly 1981, pers. comm.). Another remembered that when the serenaders would not go away, the bride's father often chased them away successfully (Margaret Warner Simon 1981, pers. comm.). At Alta Helmick Anderson's serenade, there were 50 people who beat a circular saw blade all night. They intended to take Alta and her new husband down the road in a "Model T" and then force the couple to walk home, but so many people got into the car that it would not move, and the disappointed serenaders gave up their effort (Alta Anderson 1981, pers. comm.).

The serenade was such an important part of the social life of Roanoke that the most intense verbal pictures presented to the researchers were not of the inconveniences occasioned by its occurrence but those of a feeling of loss expressed by people who were not favored by a serenade during the heyday of its practice. The disappearance of this tradition, once so firmly rooted in the history of Roanoke, came hard on the heels of a diminished isolation following World War II, and the consequent erosion of the "cake of custom." With it was rent the fabric of rural village life that had sustained Roanoke as a viable community for nearly 125 years.

CONCLUSION

Roanoke respondents disagreed on which of several factors best explain the village's slackened growth in the post-World War II years. Some of them believed that the construction of U.S. Route 19 in the late 1920s planted the seeds of Roanoke's v[illegible]ual decline. This modern paved road tightened a once tenuous link with the county seat at Weston, West Virginia. With Weston no longer as inaccessible by road during the winter and spring months, Roanoke families fortunate enough to have cash had the option of shopping "in the city" rather than at the village store. Moreover, farmers in the late 1920s and 1930s could truck their produce into Weston rather than shipping it by rail. Of course, the lean years of the "Great Depression" weakened the significance of Roanoke's new road connection with Weston. As earlier discussion has indicated, however, the Great Depression and World War II left Roanoke with fewer stores, and those that survived, such as Watson's, carried fewer items.

For other Roanoke respondents, it was the removal of the railroad connection in 1939 which struck Roanoke a lethal blow. Although the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had severely diminished both the quality and the range of its service to the village, clearly, many residents cherished the mere existence of the railroad despite inferior service. Roanoke had a sentimental attachment to the railroad (and to the quaint Roanville Station), an attachment which transcended the real or imagined economic importance of either of them. Removing the track and the station dealt a symbolic and dispiriting blow to the village. In some way, all respondents appreciated the meaning of this loss.

A few respondents spoke of World War II itself as a factor in the demise of the village. The war wrenched the vision of provincial Roanoke outward, acquainting its youth in particular with the attractive alternative of the urban environment. While many of those Roanoke youth who served in the armed services during the war returned to live in Roanoke, others did not. After World War II, Roanoke offered not only less career opp[illegible]unity in a rapidly modernizing world but also less excitement. In the late 1950s he[illegible] money flowed once again in the veins of the nation's economy, without movies, good television reception and many other amenities of modern urban society, the

sequestered village of Roanoke found it harder to compete with the allure of the urban lifestyle.

Most but not all of the respondents implied that the proposed Stonewall Jackson Dam had little to do with the creation of the "blissful lethargy" that becalmed Roanoke life in the 1960s, but they likewise expressed the belief that without the actions to bring about the dam, the town might well have endured in such a state indefinitely.

The idea of a dam on the West Fork River originated in the mid-1930s, and stirred the ire of the townspeople immediately. On numerous occasions beginning in 1941, local leaders such as Gilbert Bowyers and county politicos (Matthew Holt, for one) mobilized the town to resist the dam. At least two town delegations from Roanoke went to Washington, D.C. to protest talk of building the dam, but prior to 1966, this resistance was not sustained. Its intensity varied directly with the earnestness of "dam talk." It was not until 1966 that the people of the village began to take the dam project seriously. Still, for another decade, Roanoke survived beneath a perceived pall of threatened inundation. Although some residents suspended necessary repairs on their homes, others made substantial improvements to their property. Therefore, literally in the shadow of an impending final decision on the dam, Roanoke persisted--life flowed through the aging veins of the community as inexorably as the West Fork River rambled through nearby hollows and hills. U.S. Route 19 and later U.S. Interstate 79 had long since sapped the vitality from the thriving Roanoke economy of the 1920s, but as the residential node of a rural West Virginia hinterland, it survived as it will presumably continue to survive in history and in the memory of those who knew it.

For information on specific structures in the Roanoke area, see HABS No.s WV-209-A - WV-209-S.

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The report from which this HABS documentation was prepared, along with field notes and over 90 hours of interview tapes, will be archived at the University of Wext Virginia, Morgantown, West Virginia.